

STRANGE HIDING PLACES.—See page 489.

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"HOLD ON, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE!" EDITH EXCLAIMED, AS SHE STRETCHED OUT HER HAND TO THE EXHAUSTED SWIMMER.

EDITH ELLISMORE'S BRAVERY.

[A NOVELETTE.]

CHAPTER I.

THE Croft was a rambling old house on the banks of the Thames, with gardens, once brilliant with flowers, running down to the water's edge, and woods rising high above it up the hillside. It was only accessible by water or by rude steps cut in the chalky cliff, and looked, in spite of the beauty of its situation, a dreary, disheartening place. Not a soul came near it after dark, except, perhaps, some stranger pedestrian, returning to his quarters at the inn over the river, or a labourer going home through the woods as a short cut. There were no signs of wealth about the place, no dainty skiff—no fishing-punt lay at the water-steps. There was nothing but a small boat that had seen its best days.

There were flowers in the windows; but flowers in the country are common in poor cottages, and these were only of the ordinary kinds, while the garden was overgrown with weeds and wild shrubs trailing their branches along the ground—altogether a desolate, gloomy place. Yet strangers would pause to look at the quaint old house with its gabled roof, and latticed casements; and while waiting in the lock, would be sure to ask the old lock-man to whom did it belong. It happened that Mervyn had opened and shut these gates for twenty years, and knew the history of every house in Harlow parish. A sixpence would make him very communicative, and the questioners would be told: "That there house had belonged to Mr. Ellismore, and his father afore him; and now his daughter lived there. She ought to have been pretty rich if her father hadn't run through his money—there war'n't no land, except the bit round the Croft. Mr. Ellismore had used to live in London a good deal, and missis, she'd been at a school abroad somewhere for her health, he heard tall; she

came back about four years back, after her father died in London—she was too late for anything but the funeral."

The lock-man told about as much as he or anyone knew but Miss Ellismore herself, and her old nurse Alice, and Alice's husband. These two had remained faithful to their young mistress in the terrible change from wealth to poverty; and formed the household at the Croft. The old people clung to the place and Edith, because she was too delicate to work and add to her small income. Even her school studies had been perforce light.

On one summer evening the young lady sat on a fence near the kitchen door, while old Alice sat within sewing. The girl looked a fit inhabitant for such a curious old dwelling—a river nymph, clad in a boating dress of grey and crimson, with long wavy light brown hair falling in childish fashion to her waist. She had the darkest, clearest grey eyes—the grey that is honest—shaded by curling lashes; those magnificent eyes held such sway over the beholder that

he or she was a long time before he noticed the pride and will in the curved lip, or even the grace of the slender shape.

"You mustn't mind me, Alice," she was saying, as if continuing a conversation. "I am in one of my horrid moods. I was on the river just now, and I saw so many people laughing and happy—brothers and sisters, perhaps—and my dear trees and even Rover did not seem enough. I have lived here four years—it is four years since I left France—and I am nearly eighteen. Just fancy living here all my life, summer and winter—winter and summer going on with no change—only this deadly stagnation!"

"Oh, Miss Edith! if you only had your own, you'd ride in your carriage and go abroad, and perhaps marry a lord," said Alice—the last being the end and aim of all her dreams about her darling mistress.

"Marry a lord!" repeated the girl with a touch of scorn in her tone—"that depends on his blood, Alice. I'd rather die an old maid than marry a title that came from a muddy stream. There might be a worse fate than that despised single blessedness."

"Oh, Miss Edith!"

"There might! Suppose I were to marry this young Lockhart. Hush, Alice; hear his virtues. His father poor, but well-born, his mother a peer's daughter. She has just bought Wellington Place, up the river. Her son is young; report says handsome—besides, if he were as ugly as sin he will be her heir. He made a good name at college, they say, so perhaps he's clever."

"Well, Miss Edith! indeed, and you might do worse—it would settle all the trouble."

"I'd rather jump into that river!" said the girl, with a startling change from her former bantering tone. "Why, Alice, do you think I will ever believe that he doesn't know where his mother's money comes from! Even if I were fool enough to fall in love with him I'd never marry him—to get through him what ought to be mine by right! My father hated me, I know, as he hated my mother; but he would never have left me as he has without persuasion."

"Ah! Miss Edith, it was a bad business from the beginning," said Alice, who was never tired of repeating the old story. "I heard it all from your dear mother. Lady Helen Lockhart was fond of your father and he of her to the day of his death. She couldn't abide your mother nor you, and the master couldn't either. But they never saw each other after they were parted, till, I verily believe, when he lay dying in London. They quarrelled, you know, Miss Edith, and she went off and married Mr. Lockhart, who might have had a peerage if his uncle hadn't married again and had an heir. They were poor, for folks like them—the Lockharts—and she's wrapped up in that son, they say, so suppose she thought it no harm to rob her rival's child for him. Your father was piqued like, and his friends wanted him to marry your mother—not that she was rich, for the money came from his side."

"Well!" said Edith, who had listened patiently to a recital she had heard a hundred times before. "Do you suppose young Lockhart doesn't know the money that sends him abroad when he likes, and keeps his horses and his yacht, should be mine, if his mother had not persuaded my father to leave it to her, and a pittance to me?"

"Not quite all—his father left something."

"They would be poor for people such as they are if they had nothing but what he left; wouldn't they?"

"Yes! so I've heard. But you see, dear, it's all legal. You can't get it back unless my lady chose to give it up."

"I know; but I'd rather kill myself than get it in any other way. The law is on her side; my father was sane when he died—but moral law and justice are on my side. They are all alike—these Lockharts. How can the son of such a mother be anything—but as ruthless and money-loving as she is! Do you think if I were starving he would yield up the least of his luxuries?"

"Well, Miss Edith!" said the nurse, hesitatingly, for she could not bear to differ from her

young mistress, "it's just possible she mayn't have told him."

"Perhaps not! but others would."

"Well, miss! he was abroad when your father died—and most people don't know anything about it."

"Oh, nonsense! Why shouldn't she tell him! Do you think he'd care! He knows, I'll vow, Alice. It isn't the loss of the money that wrings my heart as the injustice and the way it cramps my life. I'll never forgive them—never!"

"Hush, Miss Edith!"

"I mean it! How dared she hate my mother?" said the girl, with the passionate blood rushing to her face. "If she loved my father so little that she would let a paltry quarrel part them, what was she worth!—how could my mother be her rival?"

"When you're older, dear," said the servant, wiser than her mistress, notwithstanding her ignorance, "you'll find out how a word may do a deal of mischief, and yet people loving each other all the time."

"Do they?" said the girl, wistfully. "How can they! If one loved any one like that, how could one ever be angry with them! That would be to hate them."

"Lor, Miss Edith! I can't go into it like that—I only know what I see. And if your father and Lady Helen did hate each other at any time they made it up when he was dying. I expect she promised to look after you. I can't think without the master would have wronged you so. Not but what you get stronger, and may hope to work some day. I'm sure you're learned enough to teach the Queen."

"Teach—teach!" said the girl, impatiently. "Is that the fate of every woman who hasn't money? Are we all born to dangle after children and tell them how to move, and talk, and think! No; when I can work I'll try and get out of that eternal groove. Wear your life out for a pittance, and end your days poorer than you began them."

Alice, bewildered, could not answer this outburst—she did not understand it. Edith sat gloomily regarding the purple woods before her. Her young heart was on fire. Heaven only knew how the injustice that had eaten into her soul these four years had injured her—she could not know herself. She had not enough knowledge and experience to form a gauge.

She knew only that she wanted expansion, a wider field, a more comprehending love, a less solitary existence. She looked so longingly for the light to arise, and still darkness covered the earth.

"Bah!" said she, presently, as breaking loose from her oppressive thoughts she jumped down and threw her arms round her nurse.

"I've puzzled you, Alice, with my horrid mood. I am awfully ungrateful, when you and William would die for me. Don't think about what I have said—I am too wicked to live. There's Rover by the river—I'm going to him."

She kissed Alice, and, laughing, ran down to the water's edge, where the big Newfoundland stood contemplatively sniffing the evening air. She felt so lonely, so unhappy, that she embraced him with more than her wonted effusion.

It had fallen almost dark now—that difficult half-light when the reflection of trees look like the trees themselves, and objects can only be plainly distinguished by looking on one side—that light by which such perfect effects are gained in woodland scenery. The feathery tops of the trees are like delicate tracery against the sky where the sunset glow still lingers, and the lower foliage is spread out in rounded masses.

It was in this light that Edith saw a little boat drop past. The gold heading gleamed through the dusk; but she could not clearly distinguish anything else, save that the rower was a man.

The boat vanished into the deepening darkness, and laughter and women's voices came from the same direction—a sound of singing too—then a sudden shout, a shriek shrill and piercing—a woman's shriek.

The dog threw up his head, and Edith rushed down to the steps, from whence she could see an expanse of water the trees had hidden before.

It was so dark she could barely distinguish even outlines, but it seemed to her that a boat

lay bottom upwards, and a launch was puffing away near.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed the girl to a man standing up in a punt, and holding a dandy gold-headed boat. "A collision?"

The man was near enough to hear her through all the indescribable noises that accompany a disaster. He knew her by sight and name, of course, perfectly well.

"Yes, miss!" he answered. "But there ain't no need for your boat. I read it all—it didn't take but a second; that big boat there—the people was such duifers, they ran into this one; 'twasn't the gentleman's fault. He got pitched in as well as they, and I caught his boat; that there launch, miss, is helping."

"But the gentleman!" said Edith, breathlessly, "is he safe?"

"That's him, miss, swimming back to the launch—he's a swimmer, he is. I never see a better! He saved one of the women. Do you see him?"

"Yes, yes!" answered the girl, straining her eyes towards where the fisherman pointed. Then she exclaimed, anxiously, "But he's not making for the launch; how slowly he's swimming!"

"Good Heavens," said the man, "if he ain't dead beat, and the current's pulling him back!"

Injured or "dead beat," one or the other, and the current pulling him back so rapidly that hardly had the words left the fisherman's lips before the brave swimmer was almost abreast the low wall skirting the Croft garden.

With what seemed like a last effort he caught at a shrub—a frail enough hold—with the stream sweeping past him. There was no time for a boat to be got out.

Quick as lightning Edith took in the deadly peril, and pushing aside the bushes crept, ran, scrambled—how she hardly knew—along a narrow ledge where there scarcely seemed foothold for a human being.

"Hold on, for Heaven's sake!" she said, in the suppressed tone of terrible excitement, and grasping firmly with one hand the bough of a tree near, stretched out the other to the exhausted swimmer. He caught at it blindly, and, clinging to it, just managed to pull himself up. But poor Edith thought her help had been in vain when he sank unconscious at her feet. It looked as if death to her.

For a second the scene swam round her; the summer air seemed full of voices and sound. Then William came running from the house, and Edith found herself giving short incisive orders—to one man to help her servant carry the stranger to the house; to another—for there were many willing helpers who had rowed quickly to the scene—to fetch Dr. Marden; she even asked the fisherman to put the gentleman's boat into her boat-house, and then ran up the garden to tell Alice.

Rover did not follow her—he preferred remaining by the strange guest.

They laid him, directed by the mistress, in her own room, the best the house contained. Nothing less would have suited Edith's notions of how to treat a guest so in need of the tenderest care.

Here Alice was invaluable. She knew what to do until the doctor came, which was in so short a time that Edith, meeting him below, said he must have flown. He had been coming across, he explained, and met her messenger half way.

An examination of the stranger, whom no one knew, showed good reason why his swimming powers had failed him. There was some injury to the head—how much yet Dr. Marden could not say. Such an injury could have been easily received among so many boats in the dark.

He ordered the most absolute quietness. The young man was neither to be talked to nor talk—not even to think. He saw everything done that could be done, and went downstairs. Edith met him in the hall, looking at him questionably, her face very pale.

"My dear," said Dr. Marden, kindly, "I'm afraid you've got a handful."

"Never mind that. Please tell me what you

think! William said he was not quite so unconscious."

"Yes, but he must be perfectly quiet. I can't tell just yet how it will turn. He cannot be moved—could not if he lived next door."

"But he will live!"

"I hope so, my dear! I think there will be little danger, but I don't know yet. Who is he?"

"I don't know at all, and no one else does."

"I have looked in his pockets, but can find no clue to his identity, and he must not be asked. There is no immediate danger. How did it happen?"

The girl explained briefly as far as she knew.

"So you saved him, my little river nymph!" said he, patting her shoulder affectionately. "Well, he's a brave fellow, and a handsome one too! I daresay he won't object to owe his life to you."

"I am very glad I was there," said the girl, simply, with a smile at the doctor's joke, but no blush. "Dr. Marden, you know Alice is a good nurse, and when she was ill last winter you told me I did well. Can we nurse him, or is it better to have a professional?"

"You two will do finely!"

"I don't ask," said Edith, looking down and speaking with hesitation, "because of anything to do with the expense."

"No, my dear, I know; besides, our young stranger is well enough off, to judge by his dress and the rings he wears. Now, good-bye. I can rely on you to obey orders!"

"Indeed, yes!" she said, earnestly; "and if we see any change we will send for you."

"Certainly—at any hour!"

Edith opened the door and let him out; but instead of immediately going upstairs she lingered on the doorstep. The solemn woods lay before her, and the myriads of stars shone down calmly; and as she looked up to them her heart was very full.

This precious life she had saved was perhaps dear beyond words to someone. And a few hours ago she had longed for change, for a stirring of the stagnant waters. Surely here was an answer to her restless yearning!

CHAPTER II.

PLENTY for head and heart and hand to do found the young mistress of the Croft. It was no matter that her patient was as "good as gold," as Alice phrased it, and was one of the people who like the let-alone system.

Sickness always brings its own fullness of occupation. Edith's began with the night of the accident. It was a bad night. The young man did not sleep ten minutes together, and the girl's attention was incessant. Of course, the day which followed was, in consequence, not an easy one. In vain the sun shone high, the river sparkled like threads of gold. Edith only noticed it because fine weather was good for her patient. There was not a shadow of regret as the day closed that she had had none of its beauty, so absorbed had she already become in her work; for to the true nurse even a commonplace patient will acquire a surpassing interest, and this one was anything but commonplace.

In the first place, he was thrown, a stranger and helpless, on the mercy of strangers; then he was gallant and brave, gentleman from head to foot, young, and very handsome. He was gentle and grateful, too—even seemed hurt to receive such unflinching attention from people who had never seen him before.

What he wished Edith had to guess, since he never asked for anything, and never objected to anything. But when the sense of strangeness and the excessive prostration had lessened his mind was busy enough. It had a persistent way, too, of making a sort of centre of the sweet-voiced maiden, whose unwearied care had soothed pain and wakefulness.

He was still confused as to the accident, but as his memory cleared he would follow her movements with an earnest gaze as if something still remained unsolved. He could see that the

household was not a rich one, that Edith was a lady and beautiful, yet there seemed no one with her but these two old servants.

It was very odd, but it added a piquancy to the position. Perhaps the pretty nurse was a disguised princess, and this was an enchanted castle, and the fairy godmother would suddenly appear and wave her wand, and the charm would be broken. Or the beautiful princess was under a wicked spell, and the destined prince would come, and they would be happy ever after.

In the enforced stillness, the absence of all other interests, his thoughts dwelt on Edith incessantly; and he weaved around her all sorts of dreamy fancies he would have laughed at in health.

He found plenty of occupation in looking forward to her coming, making a point of it in the day, and when she had come conjecturing what she would say or do, or what her next movement would be.

Edith was utterly unconscious of the prominent part she played in his life just now. She was too unconscious and simple; and even if she had been told it, would only have looked on it as the natural inclination of an active mind, denied its usual channels of thought to find new ones. She was only intent on obeying doctor's orders, lightening her patient's captivity, and placing about him the best in the house.

So it was that he came to know his good Samaritans had seen "better days." Their relics were seen in the beautiful vase that held the flowers Edith never failed to supply, and in the delicate china and silver that was always served for his use. In view of all this not a little perplexity sometimes troubled the stranger. How in all the world was he to repay all this amazing kindness? He could not offer money to a girl as well born as himself.

It was quite a week after the accident before Dr. Marden gave permission to Edith to find out who their charge was. So one fine evening she came into his room with a bunch of purple flowers from the banks, and a few roses from her own garden, and began arranging them. Neither patient nor nurse spoke. She glanced at him once or twice, and he kept his eyes on the flowers, or more probably on the pretty hands about them. Presently she said, smiling,—

"Dr. Marden says you are better."

"Does he?" smiling back at her.

"Yes, and I am allowed to ask you some necessary questions. I hope, by-the-bye, you are not in a hurry to be moved, for Dr. Marden says he couldn't sanction that for another week at least, if not more."

"I am not at all in a hurry," he said, with a vehemence altogether disproportioned to his former languor.

"Well, but perhaps you would like some friends with you—we would do the best we could to make them comfortable. Shall I write to anyone for you?"

"You are offering kindness upon kindness," he said almost falteringly, stretching out his hand to her involuntarily—"there is nothing I can say or do to show you how grateful I am."

Edith gave him her hand frankly.

"Don't thank me," she said, simply; "I am very glad to do what I can. I wish it were more."

The words might have seemed an affectation had they not been uttered with such an absence of self-consciousness. The girl had a poor opinion of her own powers. But her listener understood and appreciated them to the full.

"Wish it were more!" he repeated. "I wish I could tell you one-half." He stopped, biting his lips—no, he could not tell her all she had done or been—he was not sure he knew himself. But he was impelled to add earnestly, "You could not do more, and I could never make you any real return for such kindness as yours. Words are unsatisfying—one wants to do—" And all the time he seemed to have forgotten that he was still holding her hand—seemed only. What he had forgotten was, that he ought to release it, for the touch of those soft fingers sent a quicker throb to his heart. He did not know that he was looking up into her face with more than

gratitude. Nor did the girl see all there was in that face. The colour came slowly to her cheeks, and she made a movement to withdraw her hand, but such earnest thanks, for so plain, and welcome a duty embarrassed her naturally.

"I want neither words nor action," she said, smiling. "I only want you to get well and strong—indeed, that will be the best thanks you can give me—a tribute to my nursing; now I must go."

"Must you? But one of your questions was to ask my name, wasn't it, and you ought to know who you are succouring. My name is Dallas Lockhart." He did not notice the girl's involuntarily start, and went on. "My mother is the only person I could ask to come, and she is abroad. I don't think there is any necessity to let her know about me—she will only be frightened when there is really no cause."

"As you will," answered Edith, with an impression that some half-unacknowledged reason for not having his mother with him lay beneath that he had expressed.

"I daresay you know my name already!"

"Yes—Edith Ellismore."

She nodded, and again said "she must go."

"No, stay one minute," he said, "mayn't I ask one question—may two?"

"Yes, two—no more."

"Those people who ran my boat down—were they saved?"

"One by yourself—the others the launch took off. The next question I know."

"What will it be?" he said, with a quick inquiring glance.

"Your boat is quite safe in my boathouse, Mr. Lockhart," said the girl, smiling; "a little damaged, but not much."

"Poor *Water Lily*! I am so glad. You are going!" as she moved a step. "But there was something else."

"There were to be only two questions, it is time you were quiet and settled."

Again he laid his hand on hers, and she had not the heart to shake it off, its very weakness—the painful weakness of the strong man—forced her to yield. She drew near again.

"Someone," he began, slowly, "helped me over that low wall that skirts a house in the woods—I can't recall the name; but all the rest has been coming back to me, and it worries me. I lie thinking of it, and trying to remember. Please help me."

"If I tell you," she answered, "will you not worry yourself to remember anything more? I wish you had a sleeper brain."

"But I haven't, and I can't help it, even though you wish I had. It was a woman's hand."

"Yes," said Edith—"mine."

"Yours! you saved me—oh!" he said, bowing his face down on her hand—"what can I say!"

She had to wait a minute before she spoke. There had been more than gratitude, something of rapture in those first words—and, somehow, she was not quite sure her voice would be steady enough.

"It was nothing," she said, hurriedly. "I was near; you more than half got yourself up. I did so little."

"No, so much—it is I who can do so little—less than nothing," said Lockhart, quiveringly, and stooping his head lower kissed her hand. Then he turned aside from her—she fancied because he was half ashamed of his emotion. She lingered a minute, not liking to leave him so abruptly, and presently, seeing he did not stir, said softly,—

"Good-night Mr. Lockhart. Shall I leave you Rover to save you from being lonely?"

He answered so softly,—

"I shall not be lonely. Good-night."

He knew she had gone—he felt the room was empty, and yet he had never felt less lonely in his life—wakeful, but not restless; nor did his vague dreams merge into sleep till a light sleep had passed the door.

"Alice," said Edith, coming into the kitchen the next morning early, "our patient's name is Lockhart."

She spoke in so disappointed a tone that Alice looked up in surprise.

"Lor, dear, what's the matter? There are more Lockharts than he. Do you think he's Lady Helen's son?"

"I don't know, I hope not."

"So do I," said Alice, who was as won by the stranger's beauty and gentleness as her young mistress, but was more at liberty to speak her mind. "Well, Miss Edith, never mind, there's everything ready to take up to him."

Edith waited on her guest with her usual attention, chattered a little, and coaxed him into eating something (it was just possible her exemplary patient took rather more coaxing than was necessary); then she made the room ready for the doctor, and when he came heard his favourable opinion with unconcealed pleasure; but here was a feeling of pain somewhere through all the routine of the morning she could not account for. Dallas Lockhart! What was the name of Lady Helen's son?

CHAPTER III.

"I AM going to get you free of your patient soon," said Dr. Marden to Edith one morning, the first on which Lockhart was allowed to get to the sofa-stage.

They were both standing by him, as he lay on the wide couch, and his dark brown eyes glanced keenly into the girl's face as he made that remark—keenly, half wistfully. Was she glad? He was not.

She came half behind him, lifting his head to settle the cushions more comfortably; in that position he could not see her face, but he heard her answer,—

"I am sure he will be very pleased."

"He isn't sure himself then," he said, directly, "except that you will be free of a great trouble."

If he had meant to elicit some decisive words to show her mind he failed. She only shook her head, smiling dissent; and, thereupon, he was ungrateful enough to almost wish he had taken slower steps towards convalescence. But he did not fret long—there were days of Elysium still, and he made the most of them. Her small library was ransacked for his use, but there was more talking than reading. He could not read much, but he would listen unwearily to his young nurse, when she read aloud; whatever she chose—for he left it to her—he said he liked, till Edith threw down the volume one day, declaring he could not always like whatever she decided on, half vexed, half laughing.

"Yes; why not?" he said, surprised. "Our tastes are alike—that is all."

"They must vary sometimes."

"They haven't as yet," said Lockhart, who could have listened contentedly if the sweet voice had read a parliamentary return, and to whom it seemed quite natural to like everything she liked. "Besides, it's quite refreshing to follow a lead; I've been so petted and spoiled all my life, I'm rather tired of having my own way. You see, I'm an only child."

"So was I!" said Edith, with a little sigh, folding her hands over her book on her knees; "but then, you see, Mr. Lockhart, I lived at school chiefly, and, besides—"

"Besides what?" said he, as she stopped.

"I was going to say that we poor folk get rubs enough to counteract all effects of spoiling," she said, lightly.

"Per contra, the rich ones have no counteraction. That's very true. Happily, Miss Ellismore, I've had the counteraction, and I hope it has saved me from being unbearable."

"You!" she said, in a double surprise, that he should ever have known straitness of means, and that it should enter anyone's head he was not the most unselfish fellow breathing.

He laughed at her, divining only one motive for surprise.

"Yes; you know for our position we were poor till a few years ago. For instance, I went to Harrow and Keble, not Eton and Christ Church; then I think the pater and mater—my dear old father was alive then—had to put down some extras. Even now the money isn't mine—it's my mother's, and," he added laughing again,

"if I displeased her she could reduce me to the old necessity for care. It would come hard too; it's odd how soon one gets accustomed to things one likes!"

"Yes," said Edith, who had listened to this frank avowal, with a deadly tightening at her heart, "to money, and all the goods money brings!"

She spoke with an irrepressible bitterness. She felt as a child feels who has dug all day in the sunny sands, and reared a fabric more beautiful in its eyes than a fairy palace, and knowing nothing of the forces of the sea, comes again and finds it all swept remorselessly away. Lockhart caught the change of tone, but mistook its cause.

"I've never been sorry I was poor," he said, half afraid his words had struck too home. "You know, there are so many temptations at college to rich fellows, who go there half because every one else in their rank goes. I knew that my education was my sinews of war, and I worked."

"And now you find the work was not wanted," said Edith. "What a waste of time!"

His perplexed look at her made her flush up—how she hated herself! She got up abruptly, putting the book on the little table near him. Her eyes were full of miserable tears; there was no truth or sweetness in the world anywhere. Even this man she had saved and nursed, whose unshadowed eyes spoke loyalty itself, even he must be her enemy. Against her haunting fears she had striven to believe he could not be the one she was bound to despise, and he was, here under her very roof, who had been dependent on her almost as a child on its mother, the last being in the world save one to whom she would have chosen to render such a service. Into this room she had gathered for his sake all that could make it bright; she had enjoyed to the full the rare companionship with a cultured mind. She had been so happy. She had trusted him; and he was no better than the rest of the hard world. A brief four years of wealth had ruined him—a true son of his mother.

Yet he was her guest, although her enemy, thrown on her care; she must make no change towards him.

She must fight a battle with herself; she must not come down to his level; and the battle was harder than she thought.

We don't half break our hearts if an ordinary acquaintance does some dishonourable thing we had never expected from them: it is when our love is wounded that we feel the full sharpness of pain.

Nobody knew till afterwards how she struggled with herself in the time she was away from him, quite alone; how she reproached herself for what seemed to her the cruel unkindness of tone and words to one who was ill and a guest.

She came back later on, and as she sat down by his sofa the first glance of those clear, brown eyes staggered her.

How could meanness be connected with such a face? Was it possible that Alice was right, and he knew nothing, or not the whole?

But she was weary of pros and cons. She learned her first lesson of putting aside the bitter and living on what sweet remained—a lesson that is seldom learned very perfectly; the bitter generally manages to make itself tasted.

Dallas was turning over some views of the Thames he had left for him; he did not seem to know some of them, and she acted as cicerone. He had been so little in the district, he explained; he hoped to see more of it now.

"Do you?" she said, and her heart beat a little faster.

"Why, yes; while I was abroad another bought a place further up river, because I am so fond of boating. I haven't seen it yet. You see how she spoils me."

"Do you know the name of it?" said Edith, evading an answer to his last remark, and turning the leaves rapidly. Her fingers were trembling.

"Let me see. Willingham Place, I think. It's shut up till mother comes back."

"I think it's here," said the girl, bending her head lower over the book; while Lockhart, leaning on one arm on his cushions, looked over her. "That's it!" she said, stopping suddenly at a photograph, where a low-built house stood on the river bank in an entourage of trees. She pushed the book towards him, sitting back in her chair.

"What a jolly place!" he said, after a few minutes' earnest gazing: then, as if his own good opinion was not enough, he looked up to her. "Do you like it?"

"Oh!" she said, with unconscious coldness, "I know all the river by heart, and this house too. It's a very pretty place, but very much out of order at present."

He shut the book up with a quiet "Thank you."

He did not care about the place now; he lay looking at the trees and river with a soreness of heart that tired him more than all the talking and reading.

What did it mean, this strange variation of manner? Had he vexed her? Was she weary of the burden that had been in a manner forced upon her?

For almost the first time a terrible impatience swept over him; the next moment came the blank thought,—

"Leave her! How can I live?"

So silent he grew, so motionless he lay that Edith, thinking he was asleep, went quietly away to Alice, who was alone in the kitchen.

The girl sat down on the floor, and clasping her hands round her knees, stared into the fire.

"Well, dear," said the old woman, "how's the young master? You have fine times up there, chattering with him."

"Yes," said the girl, without moving. "Alice, do you know who he is?"

"Not our Lockhart, Miss Edith!" exclaimed Alice.

Edith nodded her head.

"Yes he is," she said, "and I am sorry he ever came under this roof."

Alice glanced at the proud young face. She could not detect any grief there, and yet to her mind it would have simplified matters if Miss Edith had fallen in love with the handsome young stranger.

"It's an odd fate," said she, taking up again the sewing she had let drop. "But I don't know about being sorry, Miss Edith. He's wronged you, maybe, but he was as near his death as he'll ever be, and ill enough afterwards. You'd have taken him in if you'd have known who he was."

"Of course I should, but I should be sorry it had happened so," said the girl, almost fiercely; "why shouldn't I? It's not in the least likely, so quick as he is, that he knows nothing. I can't believe that."

Alice was silent; she could not quite argue with her mistress, but was overborne by her, and thought she herself must be mistaken.

Her disagreement was founded on nothing stronger than her feminine love of a handsome face and winning manner, and, perhaps, that nobler feminine weakness for the helpless; besides, she did not feel the wrong in its many-sidedness as Edith did. Money represented to her much less than it did to her mistress.

"It's hard to be angry with the likes of him either, however bad he's been," ventured the old nurse, at last—ah! how the girl's heart echoed that—"and I don't think he could take so much from you and keep on in the wrong."

"I don't know. A fair face is not always sign of a fair conscience, Alice, and it's easier to keep on in a wrong than give it up; besides, didn't he tell me that without this fortune they would be poor? Of course he would show nothing when he said he knew my name; he had heard it before, when he was not allowed to talk or be talked to. Well, never mind now; it won't be long before he's gone."

"Poor lad!" said Alice—the old one less keenly resentful than the young. Don't lose all your pique for him, Miss Edith."

The girl got up with a half laugh, and bent to kiss her nurse.

"Don't make me jealous, Alice," she said, "and forget me for him. Good-night!"

"Good-night, dear." Alice held the girl fondly, looking in her face, struck by something in her manner not quite like her Miss Edith; but Edith drew herself away gently and went upstairs. At the door of the sick room she paused.

She always went in the last thing, as now no one sat up at night to see that all was right. She could not neglect one of these duties because her patient should be her enemy.

Should be! Alas, as she looked at him, sleeping so quietly, were that quivering lip and those gathering tears signs of enmity!

CHAPTER IV.

ALL too quickly the days fled by—all too quickly. Dallas Lockhart dropped one by one his privileges of invalid, and took up his ordinary habits.

He felt the more keenly, now that he must soon leave it, that his first fanciful thought had held a truth—that this desolate, broken-down old Croft was an enchanted castle, holding its peerless princess—but was he the prince? That was a question that puzzled him and gave him many a wakeful hour.

He could not fail to see that since the day when Edith and he had looked at the photographs there had been in her manner at times a subtle change.

It seemed always that she struggled against it, but he felt it; and she tacitly, while surrounding him with every care and attention, kept him at a distance; let him but try ever so slightly to pass the barrier he saw the resistance she made.

It was not that she was weary of her charge; it was no want of hospitality—he could distinguish that clearly—and therein lay the puzzle.

What was it that had changed her? In a different position he would have challenged her to tell him the truth, as it was under her roof he was forced to hold his hand.

This restraint on his part, on poor Edith's a conflict of feeling she did not understand, made the last days anything but happy, although both would fain have prolonged them. Dr. Marden pronounced his patient fit to travel, and Lockhart told Edith the same evening he should go to the London-house, where his mother would join him.

Edith had received this announcement quietly, with no expression of sorrow, yet the young man was not disheartened; her silence had an eloquence of which she was unconscious.

Presently she looked up, and asked earnestly if he was really fit for the journey—if he did not feel quite equal to it, her house and all in it were at his service.

"You know," she said, almost unsteadily. "I shall never forgive myself if any harm came to you."

"My gentlest and kindest of nurses," said the young man, taking her hand; "do not tempt me to be selfish. How can I, who have received so much at your hands, make myself such a burden to you? It is hard enough to go—don't make it harder," he added softly, while the girl seemed at a loss what to say. "I must go, but I shall always remember this time—the happiest in all my life—and you."

"Oh," said the girl with a laugh, "don't you think Alice is quite as much entitled as I am to gratitude—if gratitude is due? I hope you will be happier amongst your own friends than tied to one room. Will you see your boat? She has been repaired according to your orders."

Lockhart went down to the boat-house, and Edith watched him. He would remember her just till London was reached, she thought, scornfully, and the happiest time of his life would fade from his memory in the whirl of his existence there. Yet how true and earnest he had looked, and the impress of his touch seemed still on her hand! Had he two natures?

But the fates, or, more properly, the clerk of the weather, intervened. Two or three days of rain made Dr. Marden order Lockhart to remain

where he was; and Lockhart, though making a slight remonstrance, yielded very meekly to the medical fiat.

Nor did Edith appear displeased. Those treasured days—the sweeter because so short-lived!

And even Lockhart scarcely counted the hours more than Edith did; the difference was that he acknowledged he counted them, that he dreaded their end; and Edith tried to buoy herself up with the thought that he was deliberately wronging her, and to deny that she cared about his going. Or else she told herself that it was the constant occupation she would miss; the greater fullness in her barren life; yet her heart sank when one morning the sun shone brilliantly into her room, and she knew her charge would leave her.

When the parting hours actually came he went to seek Edith. But she was not in the sitting-room, only another instance of her avoidance of him, which she had followed for the last day or two.

Dallas locked round the room lingeringly—it had grown dear and familiar to him; he had already a thousand associations with every object in it; convalescence had not been to him that dreary period it is to some—nay, it had been more than the return to health—it had been the sweet coming of a new life.

He had said truly to Edith it had been the happiest time of his existence. And he could not leave this place even for a time (for he fully intended to see it again) without many a pang. He had no intention of saying a word to Edith before going—nor could he be said to have made a negative decision; he knew of no necessity, but the dire one of parting, that filled up all blanks.

Love was new to him—though boyish fancies he had had—and he scarcely knew its power. He knew it would be hard to say farewell—he did not know how hard to leave unsaid anything but that one word.

It was very near the time when he must go, no one knew that better than Edith, as she pulled her boat up to the steps.

She had kept away till the last minute, and now she went up to the house, with a more than usually independent carriage, and into the drawing room. She would not let herself think of anything but the wrongs she suffered—no memory of those long hours of watching and tending, of the gentle thanks and smile of welcome, must soften her.

"At last!" exclaimed Lockhart, turning from the window. "Why, how little time you have left us! As if I could say good-bye to you as I do to an ordinary acquaintance!"

She had been deadly pale, but the faintest flush disturbed that pallor; her eyes sank beneath his. She said coldly, avoiding him by passing to a side table to put her hat down,—

"I went on the river. I thought I was in plenty of time. Do you leave so soon?"

He followed her.

"Miss Elismore—Edith," he said, earnestly, "do you think so badly of me as to believe I have no gratitude—that I can take life and the tenderest care from you unfeeling, untiring, without one warmer thought than I give to my last new friend?"

"I never said that, Mr. Lockhart."

"But I have sometimes feared you thought it. It is the world's way, I know; it is not mine."

"Why are you attacking me?" she asked, in rather haughty surprise. "I have never said you were ungrateful: I have never asked for gratitude; I have done nothing more than anyone would have done."

"But you have changed to me at times. Is it anything I have done? Am I never to see you again? Do you want quite to forget me—to wipe out this time?"

"I daresay I shall remember it quite as long as you will," said the girl, moving away again.

She could not help that bitter speech; it seemed wrung from her torment and pain.

He sprang after her so quickly as to intercept

her. There flashed into his mind, half dazing him, a possible clue to her strange words.

"Edith," he said, hurriedly, "do you want me to go—to stay? If I go will you bid me come back? I cannot, I will not leave you forever!"

She drew back in a sort of terror—angry too, he saw, but it did not daunt him.

"I had never meant, here and now," he went on, "to say such words to you, but they are forced on me; I cannot help it. I said you gave me life, give me one thing more precious, yourself!"

Oh! the sweetness of that passionate avowal through all the indignant scorn it aroused, yet the scorn flashed forth sharp and unparaphrasing.

"You"—she said—"you, Dallas Lockhart, dare such insult to me!"

"Insult! In Heaven's name, what do you mean?"

She was silent.

"I will know," said Lockhart, white and stern. "I will not go until you tell me. Insult is a strong word to use to a man who offers you all that he can in all honour, or—or" he faltered, growing still more deathly white—"am I too late? but I could not know."

"No—no," cried the girl, stung to the quick, "not that, but you must not speak of love to me. Love, it is only gratitude. You must go. I will hear no more from you."

In answer to which commanding dismissal Lockhart took both her hands, holding her prisoner.

She struggled to get them away for a minute, but perhaps his quiet mastery made its own appeal to her. She stood quite still waiting.

"Edith," he said, more softly, "you tell me there is no other love between us, but you fancy there is something else. I cannot quite believe that it is your own heart that is shut against me, or your manner would have been different. You may flash your eyes at me if I hurt your woman's pride, but I am right."

The look she gave him might have cowed many a brave man. She said, curling her lip,—

"You are using your strength against my weakness. I cannot escape, so I suppose you can say what you like."

Her drew her a little nearer. She was trembling now, yielding insensibly against her will to the glamour stealing over her spirit.

"You shall answer me one question," he said, gently, "and you shall be free, if then you wish it. I will not plead my right to an answer; I will ask it as a grace. Is it that you do not love me, Edith? Look me straight in the eyes. Whether you say yes or no, and I will take the answer."

"I will answer nothing," she answered defiantly, making a struggle against herself and him.

"Yes, you will," he said, speaking coolly, but with a certain settling of the lips his mother would have understood. She did look at him then, at first in a dumb indignation—then her eyes fell, her head drooped, all her spirit lay passive.

"You must go," whispered Edith, her heart beating fast and heavily; "I cannot answer you."

"Yes, Edith, you can. I am waiting," he said, in the same gentle way he had spoken once before; "you know what my question was."

If it had been possible for Edith ever to have pictured such a moment as this she would have imagined herself telling him fearlessly that he had robbed her; now shrinking from such open accusation, clearing him in her heart of hearts from all blame, instinctively she modified the harsh words.

"There is wrong—injustice between us," she said, still not venturing to look up. "You may know nothing of it—I thought once you did."

"Wrong! Injustice! To whom? to you?" Lockhart demanded, perplexed. "I have not an idea what you mean—but still, Edith—still, you have not answered me. Must I take the answer—and as I want it—so?" He had lifted her face to his, and now, looking for a minute into the sweet eyes that wavered under his gaze, pressed his lips to hers. How that first

love kiss thrilled to the girl's very soul! It was no matter that it claimed her, that she felt it meant possession, that it had been given without full consent, and that it was Dallas Lockhart who gave it. She wondered no longer whether he were true or false, whether there were shame or glory in yielding to this love; in spite of her pride and her stinging sense of injustice she was like the rest of human-kind—subject to the same power that in some shape or other moulds the lives of all. And she had said she would never forgive Dallas Lockhart, and Dallas Lockhart was putting back the curls from her forehead, and asking, with an infinite satisfaction in his brown eyes,—

"And now you are mine, my wilful darling, and I don't ask you what you meant by all those hard things—only you might just as well have been good at once. Do you want to be free now, as I promised you?"

He expected but one answer—he bent down to her, laughing a little—a laugh so full of happiness—it seemed a pity for her to look up at him unsmilingly, and then down at her prisoned hands, and drawing them from his, step back with the answer "yes."

That word seemed to stagger him—he could not at once recover from the shock it gave him, and before he could speak the girl said, with a burning brow,—

"I was bewildered—I could not think—you hurried me on—I never meant to give way."

"Edith," said Lockhart, sternly—with all his gentleness he was the last man to stand trifling—"if it were anyone but you I could find it in my heart to be angry. You love me—you will not deny it—what ban is there on you or me that should be stronger than that supreme claim! I have done nothing to injure you—how could I when I never knew of your existence until three weeks ago!"

She had stood with her head averted, but at those words she turned sharply towards him with such a glad light leaping into her eyes.

"Oh!" she said, with a long breath of utter relief; "thank Heaven for that! I knew you could not be guilty! Don't," she went on, imploringly; "don't ask me to explain. I might have done it if yours had been the fault, but it is not—and you would hate me if I told you why I never can. I never will be your wife!"

"That is nonsense, Edith—you don't know what you ask, or if you do must think me something less than a man. I will not leave this room nor let you leave it till I know what this riddle means—why we two, loving each other, and of equal birth, are to part. Imagine my coolly giving you up and knowing no more of the reason than your dog!" he said, with a gesture of contempt for the imagined petteen.

"It is for your own sake," she said, half sick with undefined dread—"you will not believe me."

"That is no matter—I have the right of love on your side and mine, to know your reason. You forfeited your right to silence when you confessed you loved me. I am willing to incur whatever pain may be involved—there can be none worse than parting from you."

"No!" she said, lifting her eyes for a second—"not to hear that one you love is unworthy!"

His cheek grew pale; there was only one being in the world he loved, save Edith, but he answered steadily,—

"Not even that."

There was a second's pause, then she said abruptly,—

"You heard my name before. I told it you—did you know it?"

"Not yours individually—it struck me as familiar, because my mother had had an old friend of the same name."

"You thought him only a friend?"

"Oh," said Lockhart, a little carelessly, "I always thought it probable there had been something more on his side, at any rate."

"Your mother," said Edith, moving to the mantel-piece, and leaning against it, "was with him in his last illness. Did she tell you whether he left any child?"

"I never knew he was even married."

"He was—and he left a daughter."

"Yourself!" broke from Lockhart, involuntarily.

"Yes. My father and Lady Helen were lovers in youth—a quarrel parted them, they each married. My father always disliked me, and I was kept away from him. I was abroad when he died, and when I came home found he had left to me out of all his wealth only this Croft and a pittance. The rest was—your mother's!"

"A monstrous injustice!" exclaimed Lockhart, warily; "but forgive me your father's fault. My mother, I think, knew of no child he left; indeed, she could not, or she would, if possible, legally have restored a fortune so gained."

Edith gave him one glance and was silent. He ignored both the look and the silence, though they brought back that faintness of heart.

"If this is all," he said, "I see no reason in it for parting. All mother's is and will be mine, and mine will be yours."

"It is not all," she said, half fiercely. "I will never receive my own in that way—it shall be given back, because it is my right."

"But, Edith, you are unreasonable. Even if all your facts are right, and there may be mistake—mother will only have to be assured of your identity to repair her unconscious wrong."

"Unconscious!"

Such a ring in the word she had never meant to utter! The young man flushed to his brow, with sudden chivalrous anger.

"Take care, Edith! You have fancied a wrong, and brooded over it till you are unjust. Do you mean to imply that mother knew of your existence, and willingly defrauded you! My mother!"

She shrank away, half-frightened, but more in dread of his anger—her lips were quivering yet.

How dearly she loved him for that superb disdain of the bare possibility of his mother's sin.

"I knew you would not believe me," she said, tremblingly; "but don't be angry with me, it is true. Alice knows it—ask your mother."

"I would not insult her so," said Dallas, still too indignant to take to heart the fact that poor Edith was nearer crying than she had ever been in her life before. "As if she would sell herself for a paltry fortune—poor as she was;" and he crushed back as treason the nameless doubt whether his mother was utterly incapable of such wrong. "But, of course," haughtily, "neither she nor I would touch gold that only the law made ours."

"Dallas!" said the girl, stretching her hands towards him. "Oh, Dallas!"

He had her in his arms before the pathetic appeal had left her lips, and she was crying bitterly as she clung to him.

"Oh," she said, between her broken sobs, "don't misunderstand me—don't speak to me as you did! I wanted not to tell you—you made me, and it was your right. It isn't the money I care for; oh, don't think that, it's the injustice, it has crippled me so! But I would rather you had it than I. How could I harm you? If it was mine this minute I would give it all back to you!"

"My own love!" said the young man, kissing the soft cheek wet with tears. "I never misunderstood you. I should never think you cared more for the money than the right to have it. Don't cry so, Edith; I have not misjudged you, indeed. I was harsh, I know, because I could not bear to hear a word against mother—" and he would not let himself even think. "Because I could not swear before Heaven that an angel might sooner do it than she. You have heard Alice's prejudiced version till you believe it; if your father disliked you and loved my mother, was he not likely to do you the wrong?"

"He always told Alice he would leave me all he had. He was unloving, but never unjust. Your mother knew I lived, and has let four years go by without giving a sign," said Edith, con-

quering her tears at last. "I think she must have done it for you."

Lockhart pressed the curly head closer against him, soothing her; silently doing battle with the cold doubt which he called disloyalty.

Of course, if she had done it, it was for him—if! he set his teeth with a curse on himself.

"You mean," he said in a low voice, "at least you think, that mother persuaded your father into this?"

She only gave a little movement of assent.

"Allowing," said Lockhart quietly, "for the sake of argument, that that were so, you might be right in refusing to take your own through me, as my wife, not as your father's daughter. But you will find there has been a mistake—that mother was innocent. I will see how it stands, Edith. I will tell her about you; you shall have your own, after that"—he drew a short bitter sigh—"I can't think of that yet."

The girl lifted her head and fixed her clear eyes on his face.

"Yes, ask her," she said; "be satisfied with nothing less than the truth, for you must know it in the end—as I do. But hope nothing—she will yield nothing,—and I will never be more to you than I am now."

"Hush!" he said hurriedly, with his hand over her lips; "you must not say that; it would be almost like a vow! Let it rest as it is at present; we are not parted, it will all come right."

Poor fellow! How he sought to read in the eyes he looked into some confirmation of the confidence he would have given his life to feel as earnestly as he had uttered it. He could see there no change save a deep softness that cut him to the heart.

He clasped her to him, kissing her again and again, telling her he would come back, asking her to hope, to mistrust this strange conviction of hers.

And Edith only wished, but did not say it, they had never loved each other, and uttered not a word.

And when he had gone she knew he would never come back save for a last parting, and the house was to her desolate—desolate!

CHAPTER V.

It was a miserable day Dallas Lockhart spent in the lonely London house between his leaving the Croft, and his mother's arrival. He missed Edith terribly; he felt the lamitude of recent illness, and worse than all was that ceaseless dread, and his ceaseless struggle to persuade himself that he did not feel it.

He hailed it as a relief when he stepped into the brougham, and was driven to Charing-cross to meet Lady Helen; and the first words she said to him, as she still held his hand, and looked into the clear-cut, handsome face were,—

"What have you been doing with yourself, Dallas! How pale you are, and worried-looking. You haven't been ill, have you?"

"Yes I have, mother, for the first time in my life," he answered, with a laugh; "but never mind now. I'm all right. I'll tell you about it after dinner."

She was not satisfied as to the "all right," and asked why he had not let her know.

He wasn't ill enough, he said, lightly, and began asking her about her brief foreign sojourn, till they drew up at the great house in Eaton-square.

Lady Helen mused while her maid dressed, or for dinner—the slightest change in her darling disturbed her, and if he had not been so irrepressibly high-spirited from a little Turk of a fellow in the nursery he would easily have slid into that deplorable object vulgarly called "a milkop."

At dinner she eyed him continually, and Dallas chafed under the inspection—it had always been a sore point between them, and the last three days he had been so delightfully unconscious of fretting care.

"I am going to my own boudoir, my dear," she said, as she left the dining-room; "and when you have finished your cigar you can join me there."

He did not even light a cigar—the wine in his glass was untouched. In twenty minutes he entered Lady Helen's sanctum.

There she sat knitting—a tall, handsome woman of barely fifty, and not looking her age by many a year. Her perfectly made dress of dark blue silk, with the rich lace at her throat and the gold ornaments in her ears became her.

Very dignified she looked, the great lady, but not lovable, a little unapproachable to most people, and somewhat cold—she had been that to her husband—a woman whose soul seemed wrapped up except to her only child, and to him she had been ever tender.

"Now, mother," said Lockhart, sinking on to the vacant place beside her; "I'm quite ready for the cross-exam, only let me premise, by the time I could say who I was I was out of danger—what there had ever been—and it was no use to trouble you. Also that I am well as ever."

"H'm! What was the matter?"

Dallas briefly explained the accident.

"And why didn't the doctor or somebody write to me?" exclaimed Lady Helen, in distress; "who could have nursed you as I could?" her son privately thought that her demonstrative affection would have driven him wild—"I know some stupid people have done it, and they haven't half taken care of you. Where were you?—in some wretched cottage?"

"No, mother," said Lockhart, looking studiously down at the rich flowered carpet at his feet; "they took me to that old house on the river at Harlow—"

He stopped dead. His hands lay loosely locked on his knees, the fingers tightened a little, but that was all.

"What house?" said his mother's voice, a certain sharpness it is usually rounded tone.

"The Croft, they call it," said Dallas, and involuntarily—for it seemed to him a mean thing to watch her—the large brown eyes glanced at her face. They were drooped again directly, for he resented what his looking at her implied to himself.

Her head had been drooped over her work which she still went on with, but an indescribable something in her aspect, and a slight movement of her mouth, made him inwardly quiver.

"The Croft—that ruinous old place!" she said. "I thought no one lived there."

"It is very lucky for me someone did, or you would have had my ghost sitting here. I was never nearer becoming one of that fraternity," he said, jestingly, just because he had never in his life felt further from jesting.

"Don't jest," she said, almost angrily. "I wish to Heaven I had been at home. Who lives there? What is her name—I mean the name?"

But the slip of the tongue had caught her son's quick ear. Lady Helen had dropped her work in his lap, and her hands were almost grasped over it; deeply stirred, terribly anxious for the answer she was, Dallas saw too plainly—as plainly that she was putting forth all her powers to seem as usual. His sickening doubts—alas! were they doubts any longer! swept over him like a strong tide.

"She is Alured Ellismore's daughter," he said.

"Ah, Heaven! I knew it!" cried Helen Lockhart, wildly, as if the words were wrong from her. She checked herself in an instant as she looked up into her son's face; such an intent, startled, agonized look was there.

"What is the matter?" she said, again angrily. "Why do you look like that, Dallas! Sit down and go on with your story."

"No, mother," said the young man, firmly. "I want to hear yours. I want to know what you meant by those words."

"I meant nothing—nothing that you need know—an old tale—an old memory," she answered, speaking more and more rapidly as she saw the resolute look on his face settling down, and realized with a sharp pang that he

doubted her. "Dallas, I don't think you can have recovered, you are so strange."

"Mother, you are trying to make me believe what you say—do you believe it yourself? You know Alured Ellismore left a child—you have acknowledged it."

She looked at him steadily—how far could she try to retrieve that foolish, unguarded cry! Should she appeal to his love, or his duty? Could she make him credit a lie?

"Well, yes, I did," she said, "and it is a painful subject, Dallas. Alured Ellismore and I were lovers when we were young, and—and he came across this girl's mother—and that parted us—he did not marry her, you know—"

"Stay," said Lockhart, leading his hand on her shoulder, "don't add to the wrong by an untruth, for pity's sake. From the first I spoke of the house at Harlow, you were nervous and fearful—why? if you knew Edith Ellismore to be illegitimate? Mother, you must answer me this, when Ellismore died did you know his child lived? I have tried to believe you did not, but so many things have come back to me that puzzled me. Heaven forgive me if I wrong you—answer me mother!"

His hand pressed more tightly on her in his agony. A new thought sprang to her mind.

"Pray, what is the meaning of all this?" she said; "what have you been listening to from a stranger against your mother? I suppose she is handsome, like her father, and she nursed you like an angel, and possessed you with a chivalrous horror of her wrongs. You men are all slaves to a pretty face, and we mothers may wear out our lives for you, and you don't care."

"Oh, mother!" said Lockhart, covering his face, "if you would only deny the wrong instead of taunting me! I do love her, but would to Heaven I never had! I asked her to be my wife and she refused, although she loved me. Then she told why she refused—that we unjustly held the fortune that should be hers, and she would never regain it save by right. I denied that the wrong was intentional. I maintained that you had only to know of her existence to give her back her own."

"She would not believe me, and I said I would tell you all. Now I come to you, and you have nothing to say. Oh, mother, you cannot know all you said—you never could want to keep a single farthing that was not yours!"

"Not mine? Doesn't the law give it me?" Lockhart stepped back with wide, wondering eyes.

"Mother!" he faltered, "you did not say that!"

"You cannot understand it! I said it, and I mean it! My dear boy, you are a man of the world, but like other men you lose all your sense when you fall in love. We can't go through life on these high-falutin' ideas. If Edith Ellismore really loved you she would accept quietly the readiest righting of what she is pleased to call her wrongs. It is sheer nonsense to expect me to give up a splendid fortune that has been legally left to me. If you want this girl to have it, marry her—there is the simplest solution."

"She would not take it so, and I would not offer it. You are misunderstanding me, mother; if Edith had this fortune to-morrow I should leave her free—if she were less than an acquaintance I should be as anxious for justice to be done. I want our honour cleared!"

"You have such romantic notions of honour!" Lockhart stood hesitating, in despair—he knew not what to say, what to urge, in this utterly unexpected situation. In spite of his misgivings he had never dreamed his mother would take the line she was following now—all the circumstances combined to bewilder him—the complexion his own conduct naturally took, her repudiation of views he thought she held as a matter of course, her evident facing out the position. Then he suddenly knelt at her feet.

"Mother!" he said, "darling mother, I am not pleading for Edith, for myself, but for you. The law gave you this gold, but how can the law be stronger than honour or justice? Is it just, is it right for a father to leave his daughter almost penniless? You knew she lived—you did a bitter wrong, but you can retrieve it now—

will you? For my sake—not because I love her, but because I love you."

She looked into the brown eyes full of a passionate pleading—she listened to the sweet voice that shook with the intensity of his earnestness; then her glance wandered round the room with its costly treasures that money had bought.

"Dallas," she said, "do you want to be poor? You know what it is. Were you happier then than with everything you care for? You have grown used to wealth."

"I can never touch it again," he said, shuddering. "Oh, mother, it seems as if someone else were speaking—not you! What if I do miss all these luxuries?—I have no right to them. There is no room for argument, for tastes, or wishes, or hopes. It is such a plain right and wrong. It breaks my heart to hear you try to persuade me. I can work for both of us—we shall be so much happier. You cannot have been happy all these years, mother,"—he held her hands, and she suffered them to lie passive in his; she could not yield. She could not give up this dearly-bought wealth—she, who had been so poor. And he, too, would find he could not live without it, and Edith would yield sooner than lose him. Why should she give up all her plans and hopes for him and for herself, because a chance had thrown him in the path of the one being whose existence she had kept concealed from him? She would conquer him through his softer nature, and so she laid her hand on the dark head, and while she spoke kept caressingly smoothing back the wavy hair. All men loved petting, she thought deliberately, and a little tenderness would do more than a host of reasons. So she spoke about her love for him, and her high hopes for her future, and how even Edith would rather see him famous than fettered by poverty.

He was too proud to owe wealth to his wife. She said—if he were poor how could he ask Edith, again that question he had asked once? She felt him quiver a little then, and she took heart. But she misunderstood the son, who had somehow got notions she had never instilled into him. Not even her gentle touching on this love of his, her willingness to receive as a daughter the wife he should bring her, could stir him. He only repeated over and over "I cannot! I cannot! I will give up Edith—do anything, but I cannot rob!"

"Rob!" said his mother, drawing her hands from him sharply, "don't use such language in my presence. I am tired of such childishness, and I am thinking you would scarcely be so eager about abstract justice. Your heart is playing you false. I say again, I would to Heaven you had never seen this girl. I will not make myself a beggar for such nonsense! Ungrateful you are, Dallas!" her wrath was rising high—"what do I owe to Alured's child? He loved me, and he dared marry another woman! But he always loved me to the day of his death," she said, in a triumph that made her son grow pale as death. "He was like wax in my hands—what did he care for his child against me, and mine? He hated her! Let her be a beggar!"

"Mother!" said Lockhart, with almost a gasp, springing to his feet.

"Yes," she said, beginning to move hurriedly about, her cheeks and eyes burning, "I had my revenge, and I helped you; you who fling aside all for the child of the woman I hated! I will keep his money!"

"Oh, Edith, Edith!" Lockhart cried, as if the girl stood before him in bodily presence, "you said she would never yield; you said there had been deeper wrong than I knew, and I would not believe you!"

He had flung himself on the couch in a sort of paroxysm, writhing in anguish. This mother he had been so proud of, if he had never deeply loved her. How was she better than a thief? He lay for minutes still as death, with his face hidden; then he stood up, feeling half dizzy till he had steadied himself. "Mother," he said, "you have told me now the last and worst, worse than I should have dared to think. You used your power to get this wretched fortune, that you have made me live on and scatter! You have heaped shame on me, when you thought

you were loading me with welcome gifts. But that, at last, I can end—I can leave this home—I can make my own living!"

"Dallas!" she said, grasping his arm in terror, "ausay those words! Don't leave me—say but a while! Think of the world—how it will talk!"

"It will only say of me what it says of hundreds—that I have angered you by the ordinary follies. I shall only sink out of it. But what will that matter?"

"Nothing to you, but to me! Nay, if you are obdurate, stay but a week, a fortnight; give yourself time to make some plans!"

Her words, or perhaps the look in her face, made him waver. It was surely his duty to yield so much, to save her from the pain of hearing the inevitable gossip; besides, in that time, short as it was, might he not gain some further hold on her?

She saw the hesitation, and clinched it by the one plea to which most men would have yielded.

"Dallas, you say I have sinned; but it was for love of you."

There was a minute's wrestling with himself, then he stooped and unlocked her fingers.

"Mother, I will stay so long," he said. "Poor another!"

And then he walked out of the room.

CHAPTER VI.

For four years Edith Ellismore had strengthened herself in her rebellion against injustice and the letter of the law, till it had not been very difficult to declare to Dallas Lockhart that she would never be his wife till her own was restored to her. Yet a few days sufficed to almost undo the work so built up in those four years.

The terrible blank his absence had made struck to her very heart; she asked herself if she could endure this for months or years! What had she done! What was she pitting against her happiness and his! Pride only, or justice—or both! And even then, what was their united strength against that tremendous power that has worked more good and more woe than any other the world ever saw!

Life had had some charms for her, as it has sometimes even for the most unhappy; it had none now. Her boat lay in its shelter almost forgotten, her piano was closed, her books never read; she paced the paths of the garden, or watched listlessly the water at her feet, forgetful of the brilliant weather, of the beauties of the woods around her. What had she done? Was her one thought, her inward cry.

One afternoon she stood at the drawing-room window, looking at a grey, disheartening sky and dripping trees, for it had been raining since the morning.

The wind sighed round the corners of the house, and the flowers in the garden drooped miserably, while the river rushed turbidly past the low wall.

It was utterly dreary, the dreariness of a wet day in summer. Only a few days since in this same room Dallas had left her—and she had lived months in that time, thought a thousand thoughts, wept more tears than in all her short life before, heaped herself with reproaches, not all merited, and wished she had died before she had suffered the truth to be wrung from her. Passionate, headstrong, not thoroughly disciplined, her good and her evil were alike potent.

A keen sense of injustice, a wild chafing against it, had made her refusal of Dallas seem at the moment the one thing right and possible; when she had had time to cool down, to reflect, to suffer, to think of his suffering, that which had seemed undesirable now became cruel and preposterous.

The one thing right now was to write to him, ask his pardon; but here she was checked.

"Can I, dare I? He has not written, of course not; he is angry with me, or he has not seen Lady Helen, and if he has he must hate me for telling him of what she has done. Oh, that I

can never undo; once known it will always be a wound. If I write, what will he think?—that I want to call him back."

Her whole being shuddered at the idea; then she thought more clearly, more justly. Surely their mutual love gave her the right, at least to say she was sorry.

He had not accepted her refusal; he had called her his, claimed her as his, prayed her to hope for happier days. Did that claim give her no share in his life, no right to acknowledge she had listened to pride, forgetful of him! Was her fear of sinking her womanhood to part them!

Other women had done more than that—they themselves had unsealed the lover's lips; but here the avowal of love had come from him; she had an assured position. Besides, she would only ask his forgiveness, only ask him to let the whole thing rest—and here, alas! she saw what a power she had raised—even she could not lay it again.

Yet she wrote her letter—not easily done—done in fear, for there was no one to advise her, and she was full of doubts. She knew in her heart of hearts he would come, she wanted him to come, and yet she dreaded each minute of every new day.

And of course he came. It was no matter that in this week he had said to himself that whether his mother yielded or did not yield, neither the one nor the other brought him any the nearer to Edith.

The minute the girl's letter was in his hand, had been kissed a dozen times, and read a hundred, he was as inevitably bound to see her as if she had bid him go. He did not know what would come of the visit; if it gave her back to him, what possible arrangement could be made to maintain his honour and meet justice! He knew he was to see Edith—and he knew no more when he entered the familiar hall and passed on unnoticed to the drawing-room.

She had been sitting on the floor; she sprang to her feet at the sound of the closing door, and stood as if paralysed, at first perfectly white, then the blood rushing over her face in a crimson wave. Her instinct, obeyed at once, was to turn from him. Lockhart sprang forwards.

"Edith!"

Neither of them could ever recall with much coherence what passed after that cry of his. Whether she sought his embrace, or he gave it they did not know, or care to know; obstacles were as air—nay, even less, for there was no thought or memory of them—nor of past anguish! But with returning calmness thought came back, and to the girl a miserable shame. Dallas read it in her shrinking movement and changing colour, and would not let her go. She looked up to him imploringly.

"How could I help coming!" he said, answering that look. "What had you done to need pardon!"

"Oh!" said Edith, breaking down into bitter sobbing, "so much I would give worlds to recall. Why need I have made you suffer! I had been better to bear injustice than that. If I had only given way; if I had not been so proud; if I had not thought of myself you would have known nothing. Now I have hurt you, and I would rather have died first!"

"My poor darling!" said Lockhart, not without a tremor in his own sweet tones. "I think it was more my fault than yours; I made you speak. And, perhaps, nothing is gained in the long run by living a lie, even if it be for love's sake. Don't sob over it."

Edith forced back her tears and let herself be placed on the sofa, glad enough, when he sat down by her, to lean her head against his shoulder, and feel his caressing touch.

Her womanly fear had gone since she saw he took it as a matter of course she belonged to him in spite of her repudiation of the tie, and she felt she had been bound for his sake to stoop and bring him back.

"Edith, dear," said the young man, presently, "I think it is I, not you, who ought to have some shame. I can only repeat I could no more help coming than I can help breathing, for I have so little right to claim you. You have been so cruelly treated, and how dare I—how

can I suffer you to overlook it! I have seen my mother. It is all true; she does not deny it. Oh, Edith, how bitter it is to say this even to you! She will not yield—not now, at any rate; and how can I touch what is yours! How can I ask you to take a dishonoured name!"

"But, Dallas," said the girl, with some diffculty, "I said in my letter I would not have the money; that if I had it I should give it all back to you."

"And I would not take it, Edith," said Lockhart, proudly. "I know you said so, but I could not allow that. No; we will be patient, and I will try again if I can influence my mother. I promised to remain at home a fortnight, but if by then she has made no sign I must leave. I cannot live like that any longer. I can work. I can bear anything now I have you—anything but to see her persist in a fraud! I cannot bear that! She must give way, not for our sakes, for her own. Edith, darling, you must see I am right. I could not keep the shadow of honour, and live idly on what should be yours. If my mother will restore it to you it would be easier to take from your hand than to keep it in mine, and ask you to take your own from me. Only pride has to be sunk there, but honour here. Don't you understand!"

"Yes, I understand," half averting her face.

"Then we will wait, and I will try for work."

Edith was silent, drooping her head a little. Lockhart bent down to her.

"Edith, am I not right?" he asked.

"You must not leave your mother," she said, turning her face still further from him, "You are all she has."

"Heaven knows I love her dearly, but I cannot share in such wrong."

"You say the money is mine, and so it is morally. I wish to waive my claim to it. I refuse to estrange you two further than I have done already. I ask you to use this wealth as you have done till now. I do not want it. If I had it I should give it all back to you."

"I cannot do that, Edith; it is asking too much," said Lockhart, with a quick flush. "When I can bring it to you I will forget that you are rich and I poor. As it is I can only do as I have said." Then more softly, drawing her back to him again: "Darling, I know you want to wipe out all that has been done; you want to give up your rights to spare me and mine, and as an expiation, but are you right in wishing a wrong to remain! Can I let my mother continue it, and can I share it! If you were my wife now and she gave it up to me, that would save the world's knowledge, but I could not endure it, although all mine would be yours." Edith only clung to him, with a broken, passionate whisper.

"If you love me, don't let me part you two further. It will kill me! Go back to her—I ask it—tell her I give up my claim—let it rest for my sake. If you will not, I shall never as long as I live forgive myself."

Lockhart put her aside, and getting up crossed to the window. For all the wild thrill at his heart his cheek had grown pale—there was before him such a terrible sacrifice of pride. And yet the guerdon! He came back to her, sat down again, and said gravely, taking the cold little hands in his,—

"Edith, if I do what you ask me will you do something for me?"

"Something for you!" with a quick inquiring glance.

"We are in a miserable business, but there is a way out of it, since you absolutely refuse the right way. If you will not yield, I suppose I must."

"You are very good," said the girl, gratefully.

"Stay—you have asked me to forget my pride—to do a very hard thing, but I will do it to save you from grief and regret; but don't thank me."

"Why not? You are doing it for me."

"I am going to ask a reward though, Edith. May I go back to my mother, and tell her that if she will settle this money on me, you will give me yourself as well!"

She looked down at the hands holding hers, then up to his face. Her colour had deepened,

but her eyes spoke so clearly the thought in her heart that he answered it.

"My own love, I did not misunderstand you," he said, tenderly. "I thought of this, of course, at the very beginning, but I could not make up my mind to stoop my pride. It was only when I saw you would not have your own, on any terms, that I could yield. Practically, it will be the same—mine is yours, as yours would have been mine. But it is very hard—I deserve the reward."

"Is it so hard, Dallas? If I had been rich and you poor, I should have settled it on you—I could not bear for you to be in that false position, and it would be much harder to you than this. Ah," she went on earnestly, seeing him shake his head involuntarily—"if I had listened to my heart only, and let the wrong pass—"

"No, no!" interrupted Lockhart, quickly, "thank Heaven you did not—that I know the truth, though it has cost so much—that my mother can be saved, that I myself can be spared even unconscious dishonour. And the sense of the wrong would have rankled, might have worked more harm than we can either of us see exactly. You are letting your heart blind you now, dearest—it is best as it is. But Edith, we must consider it probable that my mother will refuse even this compromise—what then?"

"I don't know. Oh, Dallas, I never thought of all this when I wrote to you!"

"Do you mean by that you are sorry you wrote? I am not. Edith I should have been very sorry if you could have let us remain parted, if you had not trusted me enough to be sure I should not misunderstand you."

"I did trust you."

Lockhart rewarded the avowal with a kiss, then said,—

"You wish me not to leave my mother whatever happens—whether she gives way or not—at least I think that is so!"

"Yes," said Edith.

"I will not promise that—I don't think I could do it. I could only consent to touch the money if I shared it with you as my wife, as you would share it with me were it yours. But, come what may, my Edith, we cannot be parted again. I think it was something more than an irresponsible fate that sent me on the river that day."

"Are you stronger?" she said, anxiously; "you do not look it—but ah! how should you? And it is my fault—your nurse, who ought to have thought of her patient before all things."

"Hush, Edith, I shall want no better physician than your love, and I know I have that."

"You had that, Dallas, even when I was hardest."

After that what talk there was drifted into lovers' talk, both by tacit consent avoiding further reference to what lay immediately before them.

But they were mostly silent, till Alice's unexpected entrance broke the spell. There was only time for a partial explanation to her, and answers to her minute inquiries as to how he was, before he had to start to catch his train back to town.

(Continued on page 500.)

As our intellectual food makes our minds what they are, coarse or refined, barbaric or cultured, disciplined or wild and riotous, so our spiritual companionship makes our spirits what they are.

SIMPLE integrity, simple fairness, simple justice, to poor and rich alike, giving to each one his rightful dues, striving neither to overreach nor to underbuy goods or labour, incurring no debts that admit of a possible doubt or being promptly met, and luring no one else to do so—in short, carrying out in the daily life the principles of honesty and fairness, is the very best and most efficient means of benefiting the community, and the only foundation on which to build a benevolence worthy of the name.

STRANGE HIDING PLACES.

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A LAME MAN was convicted of passing base coin. When apprehended, it was found he had a receptacle in his wooden leg in which a considerable stock of the bad money was cunningly secreted. We have sometimes seen a considerable pile of coins unearthed from the voluminous folds of a ragged coat, trousers, or vest.

Bank-notes, for obvious reasons, are capable of being stowed away in little space; and thieves often hide them in the cracked joints of a dilapidated old table, chair or bed. Undersneath a picture, or between the portrait and the back, appears to be a favourite place of concealment.

Articles are often "planked" in the chimney behind the grate; and a watch has even been tossed into a glowing coal fire, when pursuit was close, although in at least one instance the latter device was unavailing.

Two detectives were once searching the house of a well-known thief for some stolen jewellery. The scent was keen, and the examination searching. High and low they rummaged, but without success. From the air of the thief the officers were satisfied the stolen property was concealed in or about the room.

One of them noticed that the interest of the suspected man grew more intense as they approached the window. Taking this as his clue, the officer narrowly examined the shutters, and even tore off the straps that kept in the window-sashes; but without result. Suddenly a thought struck him, and lifting the lower sash, he scanned the outside of the wall closely.

About three or four feet below the window-sill he saw a stone in the wall that appeared to be loose. Calling his comrade to hold him by the legs, he reached down, pulled out a small square stone, thrust in his hand, and found a nice little "hide," containing not only the articles he was in search of, but also other stolen property sufficient to connect the thief with several "jobs," and to procure him a long term of quiet contemplation.

A smart female thief once very nearly outwitted an officer by wrapping a crumpled and dirty five-pound note round a candle, and stuffing it into a candlestick which she then obligingly handed to him. He searched a considerable time before discovering that he had the object of his search in his hand.

Another detective, after in vain searching a house for some trussed poultry that had been stolen, cast one parting glance around, when his eye chanced to alight on a cradle in which a woman was vainly trying to hush a squalling baby. A thought struck him. He asked her to lift the child. The woman made some excuse, but the officer insisted, and was immediately rewarded by finding a couple of the stolen fowls.

CHOICE OF A WIFE.—On the selection of a wife so much depends that your ambitious, clever fellow who means to rise, must consider how far he will weight himself in the race of life by an early marriage. Any man who is not utterly blinded—any man who is not a mere weakling with women—can see if a girl has tact, taste, quickness, diplomacy—qualities which when the cheeks are a little thinner and eyes a little more weary, will prove far more useful than they are now. If you marry such a girl, depend upon it she will take her place by your side instead of at your footstool. When you rise she will rise. But if you marry a mere drudge—a pink-and-white mother with her head wholly in the kitchen and her heart wholly in the nursery—why, by-and-by, when the pink-and-white is white-brown, and she comes up to town with half-a-dozen children under twelve and untidy gloves, can you be surprised at Mrs. Swellington, who likes your good stories, saying, with very little fear of contradiction, "Your wife is horrid!" The fact is, she is right; you have been to blame, with your prospects and ambitions, for marrying a mere drudge—and the good-hearted Polly is to blame, poor soul, for being simply herself.

MADELINE GRANT.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE holidays commenced, the young ladies went, school broke up, and Madeline had now the whole big, empty school-room, and the much disputed fire entirely to herself.

She was monarch of all she surveyed, but she was nearly as lonely as Robinson Crusoe on his desert island.

The Misses Penn were not covetous of her company. She was never bidden to the friendly luncheon parties, the merry little suppers that repeatedly took place.

She on these occasions had a plate of cold meat or bread-and-butter in the privacy of the school-room.

There was no necessity, the Misses Penn averred to introduce her to their friends.

It would be a mistake to spoil her. She was conceited enough.

But Mrs. Wolferton had no scruples. She called, she wrote, she persevered, she carried her point.

She insisted on having Madeline "to spend the day with her." What a change from the school-room at Penchester House!

That dainty drawing-room, with its cosy chairs, mirrors, pictures, heavy portieres, and Persian rugs; and Mrs. Wolferton, knitting and talking, and telling her to "make herself at home!"

Then there was a dainty luncheon—a drive—a sociable dinner—the Wolfertons, Mr. Glyn, and one or two others—music—perhaps a round game—in the midst of which would come, "Miss Grant's servant, if you please;" but Mr. Glyn and Fred Wolferton would escort Miss Grant all the same, leaving her on Mrs. Penn's doorstep, not coming in nor making any move in that direction—as Miss Selina angrily remarked from behind the drawing-room blind.

Miss Selina had become very "cold" in her manner to Madeline; in fact, she was more than cold, she was actually hostile, and glared at the unlucky pupil-teacher as if she were some kind of domestic reptile.

She had nourished in her bosom Mrs. Wolferton's praises. Mrs. Wolferton's notice of Madeline did not please her at all, but happy thought, Mrs. Wolferton was going away—going to the south of France to escape the east winds, and when she came back she would have forgotten her fancy.

Miss Selina judged other people by her own standard.

Tickets for the theatre "for Mrs. and the Misses Penn, and Miss Grant, with Mr. Fred Wolferton's compliments" (he had not left home and Mr. Glyn was still his guest).

To go or not to go! That was the question debated with great spirit in Mrs. Penn's own bed-room.

They would accept with pleasure; but Madeline Grant—must they take her too? There was no other alternative, alas!

If she had only had a slight cold; but she was never better in her life. They had no excuse beyond their own disinclination.

Go she must.

Very grudgingly they announced the news to her as she sat poring over her school-room fire dividing her attention between a child's story-book and Mr. Glyn—needless to tell you who had the largest share.

She could not help thinking a great deal of Mr. Glyn. It was wrong, it was foolish. Probably, he never gave her a thought.

Her cheeks became crimson at the idea, but an inward voice whispered another story. If he did not think of her why did he always monopolise her at Mrs. Wolferton's, sit beside her at cards, usurp Fred's place at the piano?

Why had he begged a flower to keep? Why had he hinted that only for his poverty he would marry, or, at least ask some girl to marry him who had no home.

Who could that girl be but herself? Dare she

whisper even to her inmost heart that she believed he meant her—Madeline Grant!

If he had not thought of her why did he tell her so much about himself, his old home, his dead father and mother, his rich and high and mighty relations, who looked upon empty pockets as a crime, but who patronised him, asked him to dinner now and then, and had hinted that if he were to put himself into the tallow, or cotton, or soap market, where hairdresses were plentiful, and his were scarce, he might, on the strength of his connections, and his aristocratic appearance, land one of these young women and, perhaps, fifty thousand pounds?

But those suggestions he had not taken in "good part," between ourselves, and equally between ourselves, he asked himself what his grand relations would say if they knew that he was head over ears in love with a pretty little pupil-teacher—a perfect lady, certainly, and not unworthy to bear the name of Glyn, but absolutely without a penny.

The poor child liked him too; he was sure of it, but honour set her seal upon his lips. He could not offer her a decent home—could not be sure that what barely sufficed for one was a comfortable maintenance for two.

Best leave her if he could, in maiden meditation fancy free—leave her for some luckier fellow, leave his heart in her unconscious keeping.

This visit to the theatre was to be the very last meeting he would allow himself, and then for his dismal old top chambers in the Temple and work.

Plenty of work is an excellent and healing medicine for any affection of the heart, so he had read, so he had been told, and now he would test its efficacy.

The great evening came, and with hot and trembling fingers Madeline made her modest toilet, donned her hat and jacket, and awaited the rest of the party in the hall in a state of anxious suspense.

She had never been in a theatre in her life. Her heart was beating fast with happy anticipation—what a night to look back upon! Sir Henry Irving as Shylock, what she had often longed to see, and now she was going to see it with Mr. Glyn.

It was too much pleasure all squeezed into one evening; if it could only be spread out over three or four days instead of all to be over in two or three hours!

"Madeline!" said a sharp voice, that startled her from her delicious expectations, "come into the drawing-room for a moment, I wish to speak to you," leading the way into that cold apartment, lit at present by one gas burner, and innocent of such extravagance as a fire. "I wish to speak to you," proceeded Miss Selina, firmly, "about the ridiculous way you are going on with Mr. Glyn. You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"Why, what have I done, Miss Selina? What do you mean?" she asked, breathless with horror.

"What have you not done? Flirted with him, run after him to Mrs. Wolferton's, made yourself the common talk of the whole place. Don't imagine for a moment that he thinks of you as anything but a silly little chit of a schoolgirl, who is head over ears in love with him, and whom it amuses him to draw out and laugh at with Mr. Fred Wolferton!"

"Miss Selina!" cried Madeline, stung to the quick, and turning very pale, and grasping the back of a chair as she spoke, "how dare you say such things! You know they are not true. I want to Mrs. Wolferton's because she was kind—because she asked me. I never ran after Mr. Glyn—never!"

"And pray what are you doing to-night?" with grim, ironical interrogation.

"If you think that I am running after him I can easily reassure you. I can stay at home. I (oh! what a wretch was this; but her pride was roused) will stay at home," taking off her hat as she spoke. "The matter is easily settled."

Not so easily as she imagined, for at this moment loud, cheery, masculine voices in the hall broke in upon them.

The door was widely opened; enter Fred Wolferton, Mr. Murphy the curate (hush! you must not tell the bishop), an elderly escort for Mrs. Penn, and Mr. Glyn.

And although Madeline declared, with much embarrassment, that she was "not going," most positively—as she could give no reason for her sudden announcement and was dressed for the theatre—public opinion carried the day.

She replaced her hat in answer to an impatient signal from Miss Selina and went; but the gilt had been removed from her gingerbread, and all the way in the train (they were fifteen miles from River Bank) she was unusually pale and silent, and pointedly avoided Mr. Glyn, to Miss Selina's great content.

But Mr. Glyn would not be avoided. He ignored Miss Selina's hints, the vacant place she patted invitingly beside her, as much as to say, "Come and sit here and be happy," and went and placed himself at the other side of Madeline, whose eyes were straying over the theatre in blank surprise.

It was not a bit like what she thought it would be.

She noted the gorgeous gilded ceiling, the florid ornaments, the draped stage, many gay parties rapidly filling the boxes, and, once the overture commenced, she began to realise that she was enjoying herself extremely, and would not allow Miss Selina's dreadful accusation to spoil her whole evening.

Miss Selina felt that she had been publicly slighted.

What is that line about "a woman scorned?" She felt capable of anything. Her rage against Mr. Glyn was as consuming and as hot as her jealousy of Madeline.

They should suffer for their insolence, as she called it, meaning the simple fact of their sitting together, talking with much animation, and looking very happy.

Yes, she would find a way to pay them out. And as she sat silent, her eyes upon the drop-scene, she was revolving portentous schemes in her mind that would not tend to their benefit, to say the least of it.

The orchestra was playing a wild Polish dance, its burthen full of sadness, despair, and weird fantastic chords at one period, at another gaily frolicsome and full of outbursts of mad mirth—an air that exercised a strange influence upon them, specially on one—Madeline—in her present state of highly strung nerves and repressed mental excitement.

She drank in that weird, wild air with eager ears, and never forgot it as long as she lived. It always reminded her of this night—this momentous night, the crisis of her existence. She glanced at the stage, at the big, red, mysterious curtain, the bowed figures in the orchestra, the floridly ornamented theatre, the brightly-filled—nay, crowded—boxes, and asked herself, "Was it all real?"

But the moment for the drama had arrived; the curtain rose slowly on *The Merchant of Venice*, and from that instant until it finally descended, three hours later, every glance, every thought of hers was, as it were, chained to the stage.

At last it was over. Sir Henry Irving and Miss Terry had been called three times before the curtain amidst cheering and clapping that was vociferous as it was well deserved. And now people began to move, to look about for cloaks, tippets, opera-glasses, and to hurry away as if their life depended on it.

The crowd had been great; it was snowing hard outside, and now the crush was simply awful.

"I'll take care of you, Miss Grant," said Mr. Glyn eagerly, as they found a footing in the passage among hundreds of the audience.

"Very well, mind you do," observed Miss Selina, impressively; "we are sure to get separated. Look here, Madeline," suddenly lowering her voice, "meet us at the bottom of the station steps. Mr. Glyn will look after you; mind you are not late—it's the last train." And with this injunction she was borne away in

the crowd, her red opera cloak soon hidden from their gaze.

"Let us wait till the rush is over, and take it quietly, there's plenty of time," observed Mr. Glyn, struggling to look at his watch. "We will get a hansom and be at the station in no time, before them, ten to one, for they are a large party."

Inwardly he marvelled at Miss Selina's arrangement; he was not aware that she had her reasons, and he was too well satisfied to question the matter.

After a little he made his way down to the portico, secured a hansom, and drove with his charge to the place of rendezvous, the foot of the station steps—a covered place, luckily, for the snow was falling thick and fast.

They waited five minutes, no one came, no one to meet them—ten minutes, still no one; the hurrying crowd that passed up too had ceased.

"I hope they have not come to grief," said Mr. Glyn, and suddenly looking at his watch. "I'll tell you what, we can't wait any longer or we will miss our train; we must run for it as it is," running quickly up the steps. Too late—too late. The red light of the last train to Ferrystone was just vanishing into the big tunnel.

What was to be done? He stood for a moment irresolute. It was the last train, and it was gone.

A cab was the first idea. Leaving Madeline, who was benumbed with waiting and a good deal frightened, he hurried to the cab rank. It was empty. He waylaid a passing cabbie, and told him the state of the case. "Fifteen miles in deep snow! I couldn't be done, sir—not for a price." The same story was repeated elsewhere; there was nothing for it but to go back to Madeline, who was shivering over the dying fire in the ladies' waiting room.

"Well!" she asked, raising her face expectantly.

"No cab to be had," with assumed sang froid.

"No cab to be had!" she echoed, her hazel eyes darkening and dilating with horror. "Oh, Mr. Glyn, can we walk?"—mad project.

"No; I fancy the best thing to do will be to stay here all night—I mean at the King's Arms—and go on by the first train in the morning. I will go to the landlady and make her promise to look after you, and I will find a lodging elsewhere. It will be all right," reassuringly. "Are you certain that Miss Selina said the foot of the steps?" he added, as if struck by an after thought.

"Yes, quite certain," resolutely.

"Here," he called to a porter, "did you see a party looking for any people by the last train—three ladies, three gentlemen?"

"Yes, sir; stout old lady—two elderly ladies." "Oh, ye gods, if the Miss Penns heard him! Three gents. They did seem looking; but one of the ladies said you was sure to come, and bundled 'em all into a carriage."

"Well, we can do no good waiting here," he said at length. "Come along; there's nothing to be frightened at Miss Grant (Miss Grant was crying quietly, and very much alarmed, indeed). You will be back in time for breakfast. It was all an accident, a misunderstanding, and if any one is to blame or to be blamed, let it be me."

"Oh, I know they will be very, very angry," said Madeline, in a tone of deep dejection. "I don't know what they will say."

"Not when I explain everything to their entire satisfaction! I will go security that you will not get into any trouble."

And, really, half an hour later, as Madeline sat with her feet on the fender of a comfortable bedroom in the King's Arms, a magnificent apartment to her benighted eyes, with a roaring fire before her, a glass of hot negus in her hand, and a sandwich beside her on the table, she began to cheer up and take a brighter view of the situation.

What harm was it, after all, missing a train! Nothing so very dreadful. She could only get a scolding at the worst.

But Mr. Glyn, as he fought his way to another

hotel on foot, with the collar of his coat well turned up, and his head bent against the beating sleet and snow, looked graver than he had done when he was talking so cheerfully to Madeline.

It was a very awkward business, and he had an unpleasant conviction that Miss Selina had been at the bottom of it.

However, time would tell. Perhaps the worst would be "a bad quarter of an hour" with old Mrs. Penn.

CHAPTER V.

THE next morning, leaving Madeline at the station, or, if she pleased, to follow very slowly, Mr. Glyn came to Penchester House to have a "little explanation."

The maid's face looked portentously grave as she opened the door, and oh! ominous object, two good-sized trunks stood corded in the hall. As he glanced at them in passing somebody came out of a door just behind him, and said in a biting voice,—

"Dear me, I am surprised to see Mr. Glyn under the circumstances, but as he is here perhaps he can give me an address for Miss Grant's boxes."

"May I ask what you mean, Miss Selina?" he said, confronting her the instant the drawing-room door had closed, and looking at her very sternly.

"I mean," she replied, flushing to a dull brick colour, "that after her escapade of last evening Miss Madeline Grant never entered these doors again—a young lady who stayed out all night!" concluding with a wild, dramatic gesture.

"That was not her fault, Miss Selina. We waited, as you told us, at the bottom of the steps, and so missed the train. I could not get a cab—I did my utmost. I left Miss Grant at the King's Arms, and brought her from there this morning. She—"

"Oh!" interrupted Miss Selina, throwing up both hands, "pray spare me the details. It is nothing to me who she was with, or where she went. We have done with her. It was a planned thing between you, no doubt."

"Miss Selina!" cried Mr. Glyn, becoming crimson, "your sex protects you. A man dared not say what you have permitted yourself to utter. Am I to understand that because, through waiting for you, by your express directions, Miss Grant lost her only train home last night, and was obliged to remain at Riverford, you would blast her reputation and thrust her out of your doors? Am I to understand this?"

"You are," she returned defiantly, looking him full in the face with her cold, subtle, cruel grey eyes.

"And what is to become of the young lady?" he asked, with a forced calmness that was ominous enough.

"Nay," shrugging her shoulders, "that is a matter between her and you," she replied with an evil smile. "She need not refer to us for a character."

"Perhaps your mother will be more lenient," he said, after a pause. "Remember, Miss Grant has no home and no friends. Bear that in mind."

"I am speaking for my mother," she replied sharply. "She refuses to see the girl or allow her inside our door. We are not rich, but, at any rate, we have always been respectable, choking with excitement."

"I am sure I am delighted to hear it," he replied, making a low, ironical bow, "and as there is nothing further to be said I will wish you good morning."

"Good morning," returned Miss Selina, ringing the bell and curtseying simultaneously. "You will be pleased to remove Miss Grant's boxes," thereby firing the last shot, and oh! sweet privilege, having the last word.

And Mr. Glyn walked out of the house in a very bewildered and confused state of mind, boiling with indignation, cool as he looked. He had not proceeded far when he met Madeline coming towards him with expectant, terrified face.

Now was the moment for action. His senses were strung to alertness, his mind cleared of misgivings. She was thrust out homeless, friendless, alone in the wide world. She should share his name, such it was—it was better than none. She should, and she would, be his wife. She should be rich in love, if nothing else.

Prudence had hitherto sealed his lips, for her sake chiefly. Now that she had no resources, no place open to receive her he could, and would speak.

Mrs. Wolferton was abroad. What a friend she would have been at this crisis to one who was absolutely friendless!

The first thing he did was to hail a cab, to send the man straight back to Penchester House for Miss Grant's luggage, and desire him to bring it to the station.

"Why, what—what does it mean? Are they so very angry?" she asked, with blanched cheeks. "Do you mean that they are sending me away?" she added, tremulously.

"Come down here with me, Madeline," he replied, leading her into the public gardens they were just passing, "and I will tell you all about it. They are very angry, as you say. They won't have you back again, and have packed your boxes ready for removal. Sharp work, I must say. However, when one door is shut another opens. There is another home ready for you, Madeline. Can you guess whose it is?"

Madeline looked at Mr. Glyn, and stood perfectly quiet, very pale, with lips tightly pressed together, and made no reply.

"Madeline, you know that it is my home," he continued, eagerly. "Of course you know that I love you. So well do I love you that until now I have not dared to speak of it. I am poor—it will be a life of struggling poverty. Can you share it? will you venture?"

His companion stepped back a pace, and sat down upon a wooden bench, still silent.

"Madeline, will you not answer me!" he urged, looking down upon the trembling girl.

"You—do not mean—it?" she faltered. "I know you are very kind, but I cannot accept your pity, for that is what it is."

"I solemnly declare to you that it is not," he returned, with a gesture of impetuous protest, "and if it were, have you not heard that 'pity is akin to love'?"

"It is impossible," she said, slowly. "You are speaking on the impulse of the moment. This time yesterday, tell me honestly—"raising her eyes to his—"had you any intention of—of this?"

"To be quite truthful, then, Madeline, I had not."

"There, you see," she interrupted, hastily, "that is enough. That is your answer," holding out her hand, with a sudden, impulsive gesture.

"No, hear me out. It was on your account I held my tongue. If I had had a decent income I would have spoken long ago, but I felt that I had no right to remove you even from Mrs. Penn's care without having a comfortable home to offer you. I meant and hoped to work very hard, and to come back next year. Now all has been changed. Circumstances alter cases. I ask you now, Madeline, will you be afraid to begin at the bottom of the ladder with me? Something tells me that some day I shall reach the top."

"I shall only be a dead weight and a burden," she replied, in a broken voice.

She was relenting. Her own heart was a strong advocate in Mr. Glyn's favour.

"What will your relations say when they hear that you want to marry a penniless girl?" she murmured, indistinctly.

"They will say nothing that will signify one straw. I am independent; I have no claims on them, and they have no right to dictate to me. By the time they hear of the news we shall, I hope, be married. We have nothing to wait for, and the sooner you have a home of your own the better. If I had sisters, or any near relations, who could take you in it would be different, but I am nearly as much alone in the world as you are."

In the end Mr. Glyn's eloquence prevailed,

and Madeline Grant walked out of the bare brown, wintry-looking gardens his affianced wife.

Rash young woman! Rash young man! One would have thought that they had the fortune of Croesus, the full consent and the warmest wishes of tribes of wealthy relatives, to look at their faces as they passed out of the gates side by side.

Madeline had now thrown all her misgivings to the winds, and with the impetuous ardour of her eighteen summers was prepared to make the most of this heaven-sent period, and to see everything *coulée de rose*, to banish the inmates of Pentonville from her mind for ever, and to make a new departure in a new and happy life, believing that, although a poor man's wife, her path would be strewn with roses, and having just as much experience of household cares and the value of pounds, shillings and pence as one of the children in the third class at Penchester-house. Miserably mistaken Madeline!

As for Mr. Glyn, Madeline was his. Madeline was an angel, young, unspoiled, unsophisticated, with modest wishes and a firm belief in him. Their future was before them. It was.

In a very short time Madeline Grant was Madeline Glyn. They were married at a little old church in the City, with no other witnesses than the vergers and the clerk, and set up house-keeping in modest lodgings not far from the Temple, and from which by leaning well out of the drawing-room window and twisting your neck you could obtain a glimpse of the Thames Embankment.

The good old days, when Traddles and Sophy lived in chambers and entertained half-a-dozen of "the dear girls," were no more.

Mr. Glyn was obliged to set up his little tent outside the venerable precincts, in the second-floor front of 2, Solferino-place.

To Madeline it was a a palace, because in was her very own home. Here she might poke the fire, alter the arrangement of the furniture, pile on coals, order in tea, at any hour go out and come in as she pleased.

She could scarcely realise such liberty. Neither could she realise her wedding-ring, and she frequently stared for a moment in doubt when she heard herself called "Mrs. Glyn."

Hugh was not so poor as she imagined, for he hired a piano, he bought her new songs, and oh, joy! two such pretty dresses—flowers, books, magazines; he took her to the theatres, and pantomimes, for walks in the parks (when he had time); he showed her some of the sights of London—St. Paul's, the National Gallery, the Tower.

Madeline was perfectly happy; there was not one single drawback, not one little cloud in her sky yet.

He was perfectly satisfied too. It was delightful to come home in those dark wet winter nights and find a fire, a cosy room, a blazing fire, and his pretty Madeline awaiting him.

"Who would be a bachelor!" he asked himself contemptuously, as he watched her flitting to and fro after dinner, pulling up his armchair and filling his pipe.

If he had one little *arrière pensée* it was this—that she would not always give him mutton chops, and a wish that her ideas of a menu were a little more expansive.

Nevertheless, he was very happy. He had an incentive to work hard now, and he did work.

He was getting known in a small way—he was actually getting on; his foot was on one rung of the professional ladder, at any rate.

But this fool's paradise was not to last—it never does. The agent that opened the gate, and drove them out into the everyday, work-a-day, hard, stony world was "typhoid fever." The hot summer succeeding their marriage was a trying one. Typhoid fever seized on many victims, among others on the hard-working young barrister; seized on him with a death-like grip, flung him on a sick bed, and kept him there for months.

It brought so many other ills in its train it was hard to shake off. Finances were getting very low, as they are sure to do when the breadwinner is idle; doctors' bills, chemists' bills were



"OH!" INTERRUPTED MISS SELINA; "PRAY SPARE ME THE DETAILS."

mounting up, as well as the butchers' and bakers', not to speak of the landlady's little account.

All the burden now lay upon one pair of young shoulders—Madeline's; and to quote a homely but suggestive phrase, she absolutely "did not know where to turn." She had neither money nor friends; her husband had no money, and as to his friends, since they had heard of what they were good enough to call "his low marriage with a girl beneath him, and without a halfpenny," they washed their hands of him one and all with fine unanimity.

Poor Madeline was in terrible straits, but she was brave and energetic, and did not sit down with her hands before her and cry. An acquaintance of her husband's, another young barrister, came to see her and him, and gave help in the shape of advice, which, for once, was valuable.

They moved to the top story—the attic; that was one step of which their landlady approved, and he procured some law copying for Madeline, who wrote a neat hand, which brought in a few shillings, and kept the actual wolf from the door. He sent fish, grapes, and other little friendly delicacies to the invalid, and was, indeed, that *rare avis*—a "friend in need" and a good Samaritan.

He considered that Glyn had behaved like a madman in marrying on nothing; but certainly the girl was an immense temptation—so pretty, so young, so unsophisticated, and yet a girl who possessed both brains, sense, and a brave heart.

Here was an instance for once in which, when "poverty had come in at the door, love had not flown out of the window." Strange, but true! Their reverses had only served to draw the Glyns more closely together. They were a refreshing study to Mr. Jessop, who was a cynic and philosopher in a small way, and who sneered, and snarled, and marvelled.

Things had not even come to the worst with these unfortunate people yet, not until a third

was added to the establishment in the shape of a Master Glyn, who puckered up his wrinkled red face, thrust his greasy fists into his eyes, and made hideous grimaces at the world in which he found himself, and in which, to tell the truth, he was not particularly wanted, except by his mother, to whom he was both welcome, and, in her partial eyes, exquisitely beautiful.

His father, who was slowly recovering—an emaciated spectre of what he had been—was dubious with regard to the striking "resemblance to himself," and frequently asked himself what in the world was to be done with this son and heir. How was he to be fed, and clothed, and educated? Echo answered—How? For the Glyns were now very, very, very poor.

I mean by this that Mr. Glyn's watch had long been ticketed in a pawnbroker's window, that Madeline's one little brooch had gone the same way, alas—oh, breathe it not!—her best dress and bonnet, also Mr. Glyn's top-coat and evening dress clothes; that the invalid only tasted meat, and that in scanty portions, Madeline telling many clever fibs with regard to her own dinner.

The one person who was well-to-do was the baby. He was clothed in a beautiful cloak and hood and robe, Mr. Jessop's presents, purchased by that keen-eyed, close-shaven gentleman with many blushes, and presented with some pride to his godson. More than once Madeline's mental eye had seen these gorgeous garments smuggled away to the pawnbrokers round the corner; but she fought with the idea, and sternly kept it at bay as yet.

Their circumstances were, indeed, all but desperate, when one evening Mr. Jessop came thundering up the stairs, newspaper in hand, and panted out, as he threw off his hat and sat down on the nearest chair,—

"I say, Mrs. Glyn, what was your name before you were married?"

"My name!" she echoed, looking blankly at

him, pen in hand, for she was trying to keep the baby quiet and do some copying at the same time, "was Grant—Madeline Grant," not a little startled at the abrupt question.

"Ah! I thought so!" he cried, triumphantly, clearing his throat, and unfolding the paper with a flourish. "Then just listen to this:—"

"Madeline Grant.—If this should meet the eye of Madeline Grant, she is earnestly requested to communicate with Mrs. P., of P—House, at once, when she will hear of something greatly to her advantage."

"Now, what do you think of that?" he demanded, looking at his friend Glyn, who, drawn up near a handful of cinders, had been poring over a law book. "Looks like a legacy, doesn't it?"

"Too good to be true, I'm afraid. Eh! Maddie! However, there is no harm in answering the notice, it may mean something. You had better write by to-night's post."

And Madeline accordingly wrote to Mrs. Penn, of Penchester House, on that very evening, although even the outlay of a penny stamp was a serious consideration.

"DEAR MRS. PENN,—I have seen your notice in the paper. My address is—"

2, Solferino-terrace, Westminster.

—Yours truly,

"M. G."

Madeline was so accustomed to sign her initials, and was now so flurried between anticipation, excitement, anxiety, and the screams of the baby that she never had the presence of mind to write her full name, and on this slight omission, this one little cog, turned a very important factor in her future career.

(To be continued.)

An oil identical with that of bitter almonds is extracted from coal tar.



"IT IS COMING BACK TO ME!" SAID MOIRA, PUTTING ONE HAND ACROSS HER BROW.

THE ASPENDALE PROPERTY.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SIR ROGER BAILEY did not often act on impulse, neither was he a romantic or imaginative person. As hinted before, he was indeed quite the opposite of these things; a commonplace matter-of-fact Briton, who understood a great deal more about agriculture than occult science.

He had gone to the Variety Theatre because his mother had worried him so intensely about a young lady also staying at the Albemarle that he felt Lady Bailey was capable of forcibly proposing to Miss Winton in his name if he did not take some independent step; he therefore refused to escort her and his mother to the Winter Gardens, declaring he had an engagement, and turned into the Variety because it was the first place he could think of where they would not be likely to pursue him.

He was not in the least amused at the many entertainments which made up the long programme; in fact they rather bored him than otherwise; but then he had not expected to be amused; anyway he could enjoy peace, and had secured a safe shelter until eleven, when he could return to the Albemarle without any fear of meeting the young lady his mother desired for a daughter-in-law.

But though a prosy, matter-of-fact young man, Sir Roger never forgot a face, and he was not likely to forget the face of Rosamond Hurst's sister, seeing he had loved Rosamond with the whole devotion of his honest heart. From the moment "Mademoiselle Marie" appeared on the stage, he recognised her as Moira Hurst.

He felt that he was not, could not, be mistaken, and he only kept back an exclamation of surprise for fear of discomposing the performer and unfitting her for her part; but as the entertainment went on, and he recognised that this was no mere ballad singing, but that Moira was really dabbling in what he considered akin to

witchcraft, he grew more and more excited till he welcomed the chance of getting on to the stage, and was the first person in the audience to respond to Arden Holt's invitation.

But something in the death-like pallor of the girl's face—something almost alarming in the statuesque repose of her features, for a moment made him doubt her identity; hence his question to Holt, which ended in his giving the latter an appointment for the next day.

He did not attempt to go back to his seat; he quite forgot Miss Winton's designs on him, and was about to return to the hotel when he noticed a man he knew slightly, who had evidently also just left the Variety.

"Well," he said, cheerfully, "it was hot in there; I'd as leave stay in the Black Hole of Calcutta! But it's a good evening's entertainment. That girl who goes into the hypnotic trance is worth paying the money for alone. I suppose you found it too stifling, also, Sir Roger?"

Sir Roger looked at the man, who was a young doctor practising in Avonside, and decided to trust him.

Mr. Freeman had been called in to prescribe for Lady Bailey, and had the courage to tell her there was not much the matter with her, which made the young Baronet feel, instinctively, he must be honest.

"You know most of the people about here, Freeman, I suppose! Could you give me an introduction to the manager of the Variety?"

"With pleasure, if you want one, but I can't understand your request. Surely you are not thinking of appearing in some new miscellaneous entertainment? No doubt a Baronet would be a tremendous draw; but I can't fancy you at it!"

"Nor I myself. But it isn't that, Freeman. I believe I recognised one of the *artistes* to-night, and I want her address. It is scandalous she should have to work like that. Her old aunt used to have a place next mine in Westshire, and it was supposed this girl or her sister would be

the heiress; but they were both disinherited, and then they disappeared. I must see her and find out how things have gone with them."

"I'll introduce you to Anson, right enough; but which of the *artistes* do you mean; perhaps I know her?"

"The girl they hypnotised to-night—Mademoiselle Marie, they called her in the programme."

"And you think she is a friend of yours?"

"I am certain of it."

"I was called in to-day to prescribe for her uncle, who has hurt his leg, and is *hors de combat*. I fancy you must be mistaken, Sir Roger. Professor Masters is a well-known provincial conjuror and entertainer. He has been touring for five years at the least, and this girl has been with him the whole time."

"Are you certain?"

"Well, I have been told so. I never saw the Professor till to-day, and I'll confess I don't like him."

"Who was the man performing with her to-night?"

"A stranger from London; got down in a hurry to fill the Professor's place."

"I told him I knew her, and he promised to call on me to-morrow."

"Well, I should prefer dealing with him than having anything to do with the Professor; he's a nasty customer, I fancy; but all the same, I believe you are running your head against a brick wall."

Sir Roger, however, believed nothing of the sort; but he did not argue the point, and only invited Mr. Freeman to turn in to the Albemarle and smoke a cigar with him; whether for sociability's sake, or as a safeguard against Miss Winton was known only to himself. Freeman was a very pleasant companionable young fellow, and had plenty to say for himself. It was only when he was leaving that he touched upon the subject of Mademoiselle Marie.

"If that fellow doesn't satisfy you to-morrow, and you would like an introduction to Anson

drop me a line and I'll meet you to-morrow evening and take you behind. Anson's always pottering about during the performance, but it's hard work to catch him anywhere in the daytime."

Sir Roger and Lady Bailey occupied a very handsome suite of rooms at the Albemarle, which included a private drawing-room for the lady, and a small den, half smoking-room, half study, which was sacred to her son. The baronet ascertained who would be on duty in the hall at eleven the next day, and telling the name of the visitor he expected, gave strict orders that he should be shown into him at once. As he accompanied these orders by a liberal tip they were promptly fulfilled, and a few minutes before eleven Arden Holt was ushered into Sir Roger's sanctum.

The two men bowed. Then the baronet put out his hand; different as they were in all else, he had detected a frank honest spirit like his own.

"Please sit down, Mr. Holt. I am afraid you thought me mad last night; but the fact is the young lady performing with you is the living image of a dear friend of mine, of whom I have lost sight since last February, and wild as the conjecture seems, I feel positive that they are one and the same."

"That young lady is the niece of Professor Masters, a well-known entertainer," said Holt. "They are engaged here till next Saturday, and as the Professor met with an accident I was sent for to fill his place. That is what everyone here would tell you, Sir Roger. It is what I might have told you yesterday myself; but—your words last night, and a strange suspicion of my own agree so wonderfully that I have come here this morning to tell you all I know, and—fear. But first I must beg you never to mention my name in the matter to the Professor. He is quite a shining light in my branch of the profession, and might have it in his power to injure me considerably."

"You may rely upon my silence," said Sir Roger, heartily. "Now tell me everything."

"I must make one more preface. Unless you have the power to convince the Professor you are the young lady's lawful protector it would be as well not to speak to him. He is by no means scrupulous. Professor Masters and his entertainment are so well known that you would have no difficulty in discovering him, and it would be far better not to confront him till you were armed with the authority of parents and guardians."

"Frankly, I am no relation to her," said Sir Roger. "I—I wanted to marry her sister. The family were reduced from affluence to poverty, and I have never seen them since February; but from what I know of this girl only the direct poverty would have made her adopt such a career and I—can't you understand? I loved her sister, and I can't bear to think of her suffering hardships and privations while I live in luxury."

Arden looked at him very gravely.

"I will tell you all I know, Sir Roger; but I doubt your finding it satisfactory. I must first assure you that Mary Masters—as she was called—was quite a feature in our little world, and her uncle owed most of his gains to her talent. I had seen her once or twice, but never spoke to her. When I received the summons to come here I own I was surprised, for I had heard she was engaged to a man of good family, and had sailed with him for the Cape. This doesn't interest you I can see, but it is necessary for me to tell it that you may understand the rest. When I got here yesterday the Professor received me alone. He said that his niece had been jilted by her lover, and meeting with an accident in August had been taken to London hospital. When she recovered her memory was completely gone, that is her memory for her own personal history. Her gift of music and language were unimpaired, she knew perfectly what went on in the world, but she could not recall her own name or one incident of her past life."

"I have heard of such cases before," said Sir Roger; "they are terrible."

"Well, Masters begged me to say nothing expressing surprise if I noticed any change in his

niece. She came in presently and we had tea together. All through the meal I was thinking I had never seen anyone so altered. It was as though suffering and sorrow had spiritualised and refined her. It was only when she was going to dress for the theatre I noticed she looked several inches shorter than the Miss Masters I had seen performing in public. I put a question carelessly, and she said she was only five feet really, but her uncle had bought her some elevators which made her appear an inch or two taller. Sir Roger, it flashed upon me then that the Professor had taken advantage of her strange lapse of memory to claim her as his niece. Struck by her resemblance to the latter he had presented himself at the hospital and identified the nameless girl whose future was becoming an anxious question to the authorities. In short, I believe that the girl you saw on the Variety stage last night is no more Mary Masters than I am."

"The scoundrel," cried Sir Roger, "I would like to break every bone in his body, I'll go to him, I'll denounce him, and—"

"Gently," interrupted Arden. "You promised me that you would not go to the Professor unless you had the power to prove your statements; now it seems to me, Sir Roger, you can only claim the young lady as a friend."

"True enough, but—" and his face brightened, "she would know me again, and be able to tell me where her mother and sister could be found."

Holt shook his head.

"If she identified you she might yet have no memory of her past since you lost sight of her; if you have failed to trace her relations in all these months would you not fail still! and meanwhile think of her position. She could not accept a home from you, and if you once throw a doubt on her relationship to Professor Masters she could not continue with him; your rashness would make her homeless and penniless."

"But what am I to do?" cried Sir Roger. "I am certain she's Moira Hurst; how am I to rescue her from her present life? You don't surely mean that I am to go away and make no sign!"

"This is Wednesday," said Holt, whose quietness was a great contrast to the other's agitation. "I know the Professor will be here over Sunday. His next engagement is at a little place only ten miles off, and he will stay here till Monday afternoon so as to rest as much as possible. You have five clear days before you; is there no one related to Miss Hurst whom you could summon to her aid?"

"There's the man who inherited the property, the property the Hursts ought to have had," said Sir Roger, grudgingly. "He told me once if he could only find them he should settle an income on them, and he's a sort of relation."

Arden Holt imagined a portly elderly man who might fill a father's part to his beautiful kinswoman; he certainly never gathered from Sir Roger's words the stranger was but little over thirty, and a bachelor.

"I should say send for him at once," he replied gravely. "If you suffer me to offer advice, do not speak to anyone of your recognition of a friend in the Professor's niece; two independent testimonies to her identity will surely satisfy the most sceptical."

"Tempest is at Netherton, in Essex," said Sir Roger; "he went there in the spring, had a long illness there and took an absurd fancy to the place. I will telegraph to him at once."

"Would it not be better to write?" suggested his mentor. "In any case Mr. Tempest could not be here to-night, and you can explain so much more in a letter than a wire."

"I believe you are right, Mr. Holt. If I keep quiet until—until Tempest comes, are you sure Moira will not suffer from the delay?"

"I am sure that Professor Masters will do nothing that can harm or grieve her. Why, don't you see, Sir Roger, she is a veritable gold mine to him! He would not do anything which could injure her powers of earning money."

CHAPTER XXIV.

CHARLES TEMPEST still lingered at Adelaide House; the dining-room lodgers had departed in October, but it really seemed, as Jane remarked to her mistress, that "the drawing-room was a fixture." Mr. Tempest gave not the least sign of intending to change his quarters, and had even sent for a case of books from Aspendale and other personal belongings.

Rosamond, between whom and himself a strange, silent sympathy subsisted, once asked him plainly if he did not mean to go home for Christmas!

"I have no home," was the quiet reply. "I should feel like a stranger if I went to my step-mother's, and as to Aspendale Priory, Miss Martin, if you had ever seen the house you would understand how lost and dreary one lonely man would feel in it. No; I like Netherton, and unless your mother turns me out, I have no intention of leaving here."

Rosamond looked at him through a mist of tears.

"She wouldn't do that. Mother and I prefer you to any other lodger, Mr. Tempest; besides, you know my sister, you understand the terrible uncertainty which haunts us, and have been kind enough to feel for us."

"It haunts me too," said Tempest, bitterly. "Miss Martin, don't you know that I loved her as my own self, and besides my grief for her I have the burden of blood-guiltiness on my soul, since but for my step-mother's cruel, unwomanly conduct Miss Erin would never have left her home."

Rosamond sighed.

"Do you know, even now mother has not given up hope! she persists that Erin has taken a situation as governess, and that very soon she will be coming home for the holidays."

"Don't try and undecieve your mother," he said, quietly; "she will suffer enough when she finds out her mistake. Do you know I have had an idea rather similar; that if she is alive—if she is a free agent, she will certainly come or write to you for Christmas."

"Frank and I have quite given up hope," said Rosamond, with a choked sob; "we don't know what to think or believe, but we seem to feel any news would be better than this terrible suspense."

This conversation took place in the drawing-room, where Rosamond had been to return a book Mr. Tempest had lent her.

Before she left the room Jane entered with a single letter on a tray. The Netherton second post always came in soon after ten.

"Don't go," pleaded Tempest, "I have several things to ask you, and the letter can wait. Avonside!" scanning the postmark. "Why, I never knew a creature who hailed from there!"

"It's a fashionable health resort," said Rosamond, "and this is the season; so any of your friends might be there."

He tore open the envelope, unfolded the letter and read it with a very puzzled face. Rosamond felt instinctively that he had bad news.

"I hope there is nothing the matter," she began, gently; "that none of your sisters are ill, or—"

"No one is ill," he replied, quickly; "but a man has written to me about the Hursts. I told you, I think, that they had disappeared as utterly as your sister! Well, Sir Roger Bailey has actually discovered one of them. He wants me to go down to Avonside and identify her. He forgets I never saw the girls or their mother in my life!"

But a wonderful thing happened. Rosamond seized Mr. Tempest's hand and held it in both of hers as she cried,—

"Oh, tell me everything! Don't keep me in suspense! Don't you see what it means—that Moira is found!"

"That is just what he says!" And Charles referred to the letter. "Your kinswoman, Moira Hurst, is here in a position of great danger. Alone, I am powerless to rescue her; but if you will come down, together our evidence must surely avail. I shall expect you as soon as possible after you receive this letter."

"We will start at once!" said Rosamond. "Of course you will take me with you!"

Charles began to think that the trouble and anxiety about her sister must have turned her brain.

"But you never saw the Hurst," he began, gently; "why should you take so much interest in this girl—Moira, whom you do not know?"

And then Rosamond told him.

"We wanted you never to know. Frank has begged me over and over again to let you share the secret, but I never could. When we were so poor mummy could not bear that we should be known by our own names. Oh, won't you understand! She is Mrs. Hurst. Erin was only a pet name for my sister. Really I am Rosamond, and she is Moira."

He started.

"Then when you took me in and cared for me in my long illness you knew that I was the man you thought your enemy—the stranger who had despoiled you?"

"We knew it all along; as soon as we saw the name on your portmanteau. I wanted to send you away that first night, but Moira said it would look so odd, and that perhaps, after all, you had never meant to hurt us."

Charles Tempest looked at the letter.

"You knew this Bailey well? You would put confidence in him?"

"Perfect confidence. He is true as steel! If he says Moira is in danger, her peril must be great. He is a quiet, matter-of-fact man, the last person in the world to take alarm easily."

"I will go to Avonside at once. I shall leave here by the next train. I will wire to Dangerfield to meet me in London and go on with us."

"But you will take me, too?"

"Gladly, if you wish it, and can arrange so as not to frighten your mother."

"I shall tell mummy I am going to fetch Moira home. Oh! what a relief it is to be able to call her by her real name, and to have nothing to hide from you!"

Mr. Tempest hesitated.

"Won't it be awkward for you to meet Sir Roger? Forgive me, but I have always understood that he and Miss Hurst were lovers."

"Our relations wished us to be, but we never managed it. Dear old Roger was very good to me when our reverses came. He actually wanted me to take the legacy Aunt Mary left him. I am quite sure he will be glad to see me rather than otherwise. And, oh! I couldn't stay away, I should be wild with anxiety."

Mrs. Hurst gave her willing consent to the expedition. As he listened to her Charles Tempest felt that her gentle, placid temperament saved herself and others a great deal of worry.

"Tell Moira I cannot do without her any longer, dear," she said to Rosamond. "Mr. Tempest says he is going to London, and is kind enough to escort you. Come back as soon as you can, dear."

"I will be back early to-morrow evening," said Rosamond; but there was a strange falter in her voice. Now that the first excitement was over, and her first joy of getting news of her sister had subsided, she was acutely conscious that some very clear explanation of Moira's conduct would be needed before Frank Dangerfield would be satisfied. Then Sir Roger's letter was so vague "in a position of great danger," what did it mean!

Charles Tempest was an ideal escort. A handsome tip to the guard prevented their privacy being disturbed, and as the train went up express from the first junction, they were soon in London, where Frank joined them.

Mr. Dangerfield's satisfaction that his old friend and his fiancée were on such confidential terms was great.

"I think my brain would have given way soon," he said to Tempest. "You see I was always afraid of betraying that the Martins were your kinswomen, and yet you took such an interest in Moira's fate it was cruel to keep aloof from you."

They lunched at Liverpool-street, the two men refusing to continue the journey unless Rosa-

mond would eat and drink. She would need all her strength by-and-by they told her.

There was no train to Avonside for two hours. They had just missed the express, and were compelled to travel by a slow parliamentary. It was eight o'clock before they reached the bright southern watering place; but late as it was Sir Roger stood on the platform to meet them.

"I thought it best to bring Miss Hurst with me," explained Charles Tempest, "and this is her fiancé, Mr. Dangerfield."

"I engaged rooms at the Albemarle," said Sir Roger, "as soon as I knew you were coming. A friend of mine, a young doctor here, is a married man, and I know his wife will be very pleased to put up Miss Hurst. Freeman knows the position fully, and it was to his house I intended to take Miss Moira if I could succeed in inducing that scoundrel of a Professor to give her up."

"Professor Masters!" exclaimed Rosamond and Mr. Tempest in one breath. "Do you mean he knows where Moira is?"

"He is passing her off as his niece at this moment and making her assist him in his entertainment. It was there I saw and recognized her."

"And did she know you?"

"She did not see me; besides—" and he gave a brief account of the terrible calamity which had befallen the girl after her accident.

"Freeman thinks," he went on, "that the very sight of anyone she knows and loves will bring back her lost memory at a bound. I should have sent for you, Miss Hurst, instead of Mr. Tempest, if only I had had the least idea where to find you."

"We can never be grateful enough to you," said Rosamond. "Oh, Sir Roger, for months we have suffered the most horrible anxiety about Moira, and that odious Professor tried to make us believe she had deserted us and gone abroad."

"We shall have a toughish battle with him," said Sir Roger, "but he's laid up just now, and the man who takes his place in the entertainment is a good fellow. I have told him all I know, and he suggests that after her part of the performance is over, instead of escorting your sister to the Professor's lodgings, he shall bring her to Mrs. Freeman's. I thought we had better go there at once ourselves though they can't arrive till half-past ten."

Alice Freeman was a dear little matron of two years' standing. She had a sister to whom she was devotedly attached, and so she understood a little of what Rosamond had suffered. The three gentlemen retired with the doctor to his study, but Alice and Miss Tindal took Rosamond to the drawing-room, and after administering tea, that universal panacea of womanhood, tried their utmost to cheer and encourage her.

"My husband says that your sister's memory is certain to return with the shock of seeing you," said Mrs. Freeman. "Is it not wonderful Sir Roger recognizing her?"

"And then his meeting Alfred," put in Katy Tindal. "You know, Miss Hurst, my brother-in-law doesn't go to a place of amusement twice a year; but he is an intense objector to hypnotism, and so never loses an opportunity of studying 'phases of the so-called art.'"

"It only it is Moira," breathed Rosamond. "Oh, Mrs. Freeman, if it is all a mistake, I shall be miserable."

"It won't be," said Alice, blithely. "Now, let me tell you what we thought of. Mr. Holt is to bring your sister here, and we suggest that she should be taken straight to my own little sitting-room, and that you should be there waiting for her. It would be less trying for you both than to meet here among strangers."

"I think it is a beautiful plan," said Rosamond, gratefully; "but I can't think of you as a stranger after all your goodness."

If anyone had told Rosamond Hurst when she got up that morning she would see Moira before she slept she would never have believed them, and when, soon after ten, Mrs. Freeman left her alone in her little sitting-room, she felt as if she were the creature of a dream.

The room was not a boudoir, only a homely little place where the mistress of the house did needlework, not ornamental enough for the draw-

ing-room, made up her accounts and so on. By a strange chance, both in size and shape, it was very like the Martins' sitting room at Adelaide House. The furniture was of the same useful, inexpensive kind. Rosamond was glad of it. Perhaps it would recall to Moira the room where they had spent so many happy hours together.

She heard the front door-bell peal, and then the hum of an arrival, then steps came down the passage, and Alice Freeman opened the door of Rosamond's retreat.

"I have brought your sister," she said, gently; but Rosamond could see the tears in her pretty eyes, and loved her for them.

For one moment Moira looked around her in a strange dazed sort of way, then a sudden light came into her face. She flung her arms round her sister, and cried with a sobbing sigh.

"Oh Rose! Rose! save me. Take me away from that awful man."

"My darling," and the elder girl's voice was full of protecting love, "I have found you at last. Thank Heaven for that! Oh, Moira, dear, we have missed you so."

"It is coming back to me," said Moira, putting one hand across her brow, "bit by bit. Oh! Rosamond! I have been in a kind of dream, I think. I had an accident the very day after I left you. They took me to a hospital, and when I recovered consciousness my memory was gone. I did not know even my own name."

"And then Professor Masters claimed you as his niece. She had gone to South Africa, and he wanted some one to replace her in the entertainment," said Rosamond.

Moira shuddered.

"He was never unkind to me," she said, in answer to her sister; "but I was afraid of him. I seemed to feel he did not want my memory to come back."

"He did his best to hide you. He tried to make Frank and me believe you had gone to Africa."

"Frank and you, then—"

"We are engaged," said Rosamond, with a charming blush. "I was so miserable about you, and he was so good to me I had to give in. Besides, I told him who we were, and he said it did not make any difference."

"And mummy?"

"She is quite well, and longing to see you. Oh, Moira! do you know how we found you out?"

"I have not an idea."

"Roger Bailey recognised you at the theatre, and sent to Mr. Tempest as your nearest male relation to come and identify you. Poor Roger, he did not know our address, you know. I was talking to Mr. Tempest when the letter came, and then I had to tell him."

"And he knows?"

"He knows we are Rosamond and Moira Hurst. He took it very quietly, dear. He seems impressed with our kindness in his illness."

"We were never very kind to him."

"We didn't turn him into the street, which I believe is the correct treatment for an enemy," declared Rosamond.

A clock struck eleven. Moira started up with a little cry.

"I must be going. The Professor will be so angry."

"You must stay here. Don't trouble your head about the Professor. Sir Roger, my Frank, Mr. Tempest, and this nice doctor were going together to interview him as soon as you were safe with me."

"But he will never give me up," and Moira trembled; her recent experiences had completely shattered her nerves.

"Dear," persisted Rosamond, "he will give you up, for the best of all reasons, because he can't help himself. Why, he could have penal servitude for what he has done. I don't know if you would call it fraud or embezzlement; but it must be a crime to steal you and represent you as his niece."

Alice Freeman came in then to take the sisters to the dining room, where supper was waiting. She and Katy welcomed Moira with genuine kindness, and the girl was not ungrateful, but she clung to her sister. It really seemed as if she could not realise her happiness, and feared Rose

would vanish into space if she let go of her. Sir Roger went straight from the interview with Masters to his hotel, but the other two returned with Mr. Freeman to tell the ladies how things had sped. The Professor had stormed terribly, but had to give in at last. He gave up all claim on Moira, and signed a paper confessing she was not his niece, and he had secured possession of her by wilful perjury. His chief anxiety, Mr. Tempest added, smiling, was how to find a substitute for the last two nights at the Variety, as he had no intention of paying a fine for breach of contract.

When the sisters had retired Mr. Freeman spoke more plainly. He said that the public appearances, and the exertions she had been forced to make, had been the worst thing possible for Moira. She was in a terribly nervous, shattered state, and the best thing would be to take her abroad at once for the rest of the winter. Constant care, change of scene and bright pleasant society would in time restore her to her old self, but for years to come she would need to lead a sheltered life.

"She looks to me only the shadow of her old self," said Frank Dangerfield. "By George! I'd like to have had the punishing of that villain. You were right, doctor, in saying we must think of Moira first, and that for her to appear against him would be a terrible trial, but I can't bear the idea of his getting off scot free."

"He won't," said Alfred Freeman quickly; "this affair will wound him in his tenderest point—his pocket. He had engagements well into February, and he can't fulfil one of them unless he finds an efficient assistant, and mind you they are rare."

"Well," said Tempest, rising, "we must be off. Mr. Freeman, I shall never forget your kindness in this matter."

"Nor I," chimed in Dangerfield. "Moira Hurst will soon, I hope, be my sister, and I am as grateful to you as though I already filled the relation of brother to her. You cannot guess what Rosamond has suffered all these weary months from suspense and anxiety. I think her life would always have been a shadowed one if her sister's fate had not been made clear."

CHAPTER XXV.

CHRISTMAS was just over. The first Christmas for years the Hursts had spent away from Aspendale, but they confessed the festival had been as happy as any they had passed at the Priory. The gentle mother was so radiant in the joy of Rosamond's engagement and Moira's restoration that really it was hard to believe she was really just as poor as when she came to Netherton to start letting lodgings.

"You know," said Charles Tempest, who was now a prime favourite with her, and had been admitted to her sanctum for a long chat one December afternoon when she chanced to be alone, "you know, Mrs. Hurst, this state of things can't possibly go on. I am a very obstinate man, and I have made a resolve I will never set foot in the Priory until you accept an allowance from me. I won't try to overwhelm you with wealth. I allow my stepmother a thousand a year, why shouldn't you accept the same income?"

"Because Mrs. Tempest has a claim on you, and I have none."

"You have far more in that I have despoiled you."

"Mrs. Tempest has eight children, and I have only two. Only one to provide for, indeed, as Mr. Dangerfield wants to marry Rosamond at once."

"Mrs. Hurst, I am very fond of Adelaide House, will you let me take it off your hands? You could go on living here as 'Mrs. Martin,' and you won't like to change your name in the eyes of the invaluable Jane and all her gossips; will you let me relieve you of the bargain you made last April, which will set you free to choose a new home near that Queen Anne's flat Frank and Rosamond mean to find?"

"You don't want another country house."

"But I am never going back to the Priory

unless I get my way in two things. First, that you accept a regular income."

"I will never take a thousand a year," said Mrs. Hurst, "it is far too much; but if you like to allow me four hundred I will be very grateful. I could not have accepted it while we were strangers, but you seem to me now like an old friend."

"It is absurdly small," said Charles; "but I am glad you give way so far. Now can you guess the other thing I want?"

"My dear Mr. Tempest I never guessed anything in my life."

"Erin," he said laconically; but she looked so bewildered he had to explain.

"To me she will always be Erin. Mrs. Hurst, give me your youngest child, and I will cherish her as Heaven's best gift. I love her with every fibre of my heart."

Mrs. Tempest smiled.

"And yet the girls always used to call you our enemy. Moira is in the dining-room writing letters, and I really think you had better ask her yourself. My girls always take their own way, though I must say it is generally a good one."

But Moira was not writing letters. She sat on the big broad sofa looking terribly fragile and delicate as it seemed to her lover.

"Lost in a day-dream, Moira?"

Ever since that journey to Avonside Charles Tempest had called the girls by their Christian name, perhaps because he could not bring himself to use "Martin" when he knew it was only assumed.

"I was thinking of those four dreadful months I was away; somehow I never can get them out of my head."

"You never will until you have a thorough change; you ought to go abroad."

"But it would be cruel to part Frank and Rosamond, and mummy would be torn in two whether to go with me or stay with Rose."

"Quite true. Will you let me take you abroad, Erin? I am quite sure a month in the sunny south is the quite thing needed to set me up after my accident, and I am certain no one could take such care of you as your husband."

She blushed rosy red; but Charles held her hand in his and pleaded for an answer. "I was your enemy once, dear, but I love you so I do believe I could make you happy."

Still no answer, and so he went on.

"If you won't have me with it I shall 'lend' you the Priory; I fear by the terms of the will I can't give it you, but I will lend it you till I die."

"I don't want it, and it's horrid of you to talk about dying."

"I don't care much about living if you won't accept me."

"You know I can't," said the girl, simply.

"What would your stepmother say?"

"Just what she pleased. Dear, I grant that Mrs. Tempest was abominably rude to you, but surely you won't wreck our happiness just to oblige her? And little girl, I verily believe that deep down in your heart you care for me just a little."

"Not a little," interrupted the girl, blushing, "but a great deal."

"Then you must make me happy. Erin, surely you won't let an angry woman's spite part two people who love each other?"

And Erin hid her head upon his breast, as she agreed some day to marry her dearest foe.

Charles Tempest did not give her time for any scruples. He talked so learnedly to Mrs. Hurst and Rosamond of the dangers of the English climate and the urgent need of a winter in the south both for himself and his fiancée, that they were completely won over to his side; he assured them trousseaux could be bought just as well after marriage as before; finally he went up to London and returned with a special license, after which, before anyone at Netherton had even heard of the engagement, he and Moira were quietly married.

Mrs. Hurst and Rose remained at Adelaide House; it was currently reported in Netherton that the "Martins" had come into a fortune, and changed their name, anyway, it was known—

on the authority of Jane—that no more lodgers would be needed.

Mrs. Tempest heard of the wedding first from the newspapers, and was simply furious; but as her eldest daughter (a most sensible young woman) represented, they had nothing to gain and everything to lose by offending Charles, she thought of her annual allowance of a thousand a year, put her pride in her pocket, and instead of the angry denunciations she would have longed to utter, actually sent her stepson a note of congratulation.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Tempest came home in April in perfect health and radiant happiness. All the neighbourhood turned out to welcome them; their carriage was drawn to the Priory by admiring tenants, and if Mr. Tempest had been unpopular at his first arrival he had no cause to complain of his reception now, for everyone seemed delighted that he had brought his young wife to the home of his ancestors.

Mrs. Hurst was settled at the Dover House, but she and Rosamond were at the Priory to receive the happy pair; so, too, was an old friend, Sir Roger Bailey, who had returned from his own honeymoon not so very long before, and whose bride (*née* Katy Tindall) took a very deep interest in Moira Tempest.

The first event of note after the Tempests' return was Rosamond's marriage. It was a very grand affair. If Charles had hurried on his own nuptials, and neglected such matters as bridesmaids and wedding-cake, he was most lavish in providing his sister-in-law with every suitable bridal adjunct, and people from far and near said they had never seen a prettier wedding than Mrs. Dangerfield's.

Adelaide House was bought by the master of Aspendale, and Jane was installed in it as house-keeper and caretaker. No one lived there, in the strict sense of the word, but the Dangerfields and the Tempests often go down for weeks together, and they declare that they enjoy Netherton air better than that of any other sea-side place of their acquaintance.

Frank's uncle is still alive, but the prodigal son has been gathered to his rest, so there seems every chance that in course of time Rosamond will be Lady Dangerfield.

People say that the author and his wife are a model couple; but if so, Moira and Charles Tempest run them hard.

There are little folks in the stately nursery at the Priory now, and Mrs. Dangerfield has had to relinquish the Queen Anne's flat for a more commodious dwelling.

Mrs. Hurst lives nominally at the Dover House, but really divides most of her time between her daughters. Both their husbands love her dearly, and declare she is an ideal mother-in-law; the gentle lady is devoted to her grand children, and has long since been completely reconciled to her old aunt's disposal of

THE ASPENDALE PROPERTY.

[THE END.]

An invention provides for pneumatic seats in railway carriages. These may be readily inflated by means of a hose connected with the pipes of the air-brake. In this manner travelling may be made a luxury at small permanent cost to the railway companies.

The largest tunnel ever built—the underwater section of the Blackwall Tunnel, under the Thames—has just been finished. It is twenty-seven feet in diameter and one mile in length, and connects Poplar on the north side of the river with Greenwich on the south. Nearly four thousand feet of this tunnel had to be driven by compressed air. The accuracy of the survey and the dangers of the work may be imagined from the statement of the engineers that while driving the shield under the river bed there were, at one time, but five feet and two inches of earth between the top of the tunnel and the water. So great was the danger of the water bursting through that large quantities of clay were dumped into the river over the thinnest spots.

PAYING THE PENALTY.

CHAPTER XLIX.

"RACHEL, is this you?" repeated Philip Walton, as his eyes rested upon the fair form and bowed head of the young stranger who had glided into the seat beside him.

She did not speak to him. The words in which she would have answered him died away in her throat in incoherent monosyllables.

One glance, and he saw that he had not been mistaken—it was Rachel!

In an instant he realized that she had escaped from the burning building, and he knew that she was making her way to her friends, perhaps, which would mean a thorough search for him, and untold dangers if he were unlucky enough to have to face the alarming situation.

For a moment Philip Walton felt almost dazed at the thoughts which came surging through his mind.

She was in his power once again, he concluded. He must change her course of action to suit his interests, or the blow which he had been looking out for so long would fall upon his head.

"Why are you starting out on this journey alone, Rachel, and at night?" he asked in deep solicitude.

"I—I—am going to travel this wide world over until I find employment that will keep me, if I have to go ever so far off. Do you know where there is a vacancy, sir?" she asked, turning imploringly to him.

"I will certainly do all in my power for you," he said, reassuringly. "You may certainly thank kind fate that you fell into my hands, and to none other. Where is your destination?"

Just at that instant his eyes fell upon her ticket, which she held in her hand, and he read the word "Glasgow" on it.

"I am going to Glasgow," he added, quickly, "and as you are probably travelling to the same place I will take pleasure in seeing that you arrive there safely."

Rachel murmured some unintelligible reply, then both relapsed into silence for a while.

She did not notice how searchingly he was regarding her, how his eyes lighted up brightly at sight of the fair, sweet face beside him.

"She has become more wondrously beautiful than ever," he thought. "What a fool I was to relinquish my hold of this peerless beauty, when he one stood in my way—no one knew my secret. It was the most foolish thing I ever did, but here I find her, thrown on the merciless waves of circumstance again, with no one to shield her but myself," and he fell to wondering how it would end. "Whatever is to be, will be," he told himself; "and it is clearly exemplified in this case. This pair of sweet, serious brown eyes are my undoing, I feel sure."

Philip Walton was startled suddenly from his reverie by the quick, excited words of a well-dressed, middle-aged woman, who rushed up and down in deep agitation, peering into every seat as if in search of something.

"What is the matter, my good woman?" asked Mr. Walton. "Have you lost anything?"

"I have dropped my purse somewhere. I wouldn't have lost it for anything. I will give twenty-five pounds to anyone who will find it for me. It's not so much the money in it that I care for as a lock of hair tied with a bit of ribbon that I took from my only daughter's head a little while before she died. It's all I have to remind me of her. The money is not so much an object to me," she repeated.

"It cannot be very far off," interposed Walton, feeling sorry for her. "Do not distress yourself; we will make a search for it."

This quieted her for a time, and suiting the action to the word Walton commenced at the furthest end of the compartment to look for it, while the lady repeated to Rachel the reason why she was so anxious to find her lost pocket-book.

The lady's deep agitation seemed to arouse Rachel, and a ray of intelligence broke over

her face as the truth forced itself to her dazed mind.

"I—I found this little purse here. Is it yours, I wonder?" asked Rachel, anxiously.

"Why, bless my soul, dear, it is just the one I lost, as I live! You must allow me to give you my heartfelt thanks and reward you for your finding it, and do not mention it either. You couldn't have done me a greater kindness in life, and I am oh! so grateful to you!" looking into the lovely dazed face.

Rachel knew but little that she was saying, nor did she know that her grateful benefactress had slipped more than the stipulated reward into her cloak pocket, thinking she was so refined, so gentle, she might refuse it; besides, she had taken a strange liking to her, and she would like to find out who she was.

"Are you travelling far, and with friends, of course?" asked the lady presently.

"I have no friends, no one who knows me. I am going to Glasgow to get employment," Rachel answered in a straightforward manner.

The lady looked at her in surprise, wondering if she had heard aright, and marvelling at her companion's rare beauty.

"Poor dear, you have my sympathy, you are so young to meet life's battle alone. Where are you going to?"

Rachel looked bewildered as she showed her the ticket.

"To Glasgow," the lady repeated to herself, "where my son is living." Aloud she said,—"If you stop very long in that city I wish you would call upon my son, Donald MacKenzie; he is a banker there."

Rachel murmured some unintelligible reply which the lady did not quite catch, and just at that moment Philip Walton came up to them.

"Thanks very much for the trouble I am sorry I put you to, but this young lady, fortunately for me, found my purse. I am so grateful."

"I am only too glad it is restored to you," he said, promptly.

There was another pause, then Mrs. MacKenzie grasped Rachel's hand, shook it warmly, saying she would reach her destination soon, and hoping they would meet again, bid her farewell.

Rachel soon forgot this little event, and Philip Walton, having so many other things to think of would certainly never have given the matter another thought had it not been for a singular incident that transpired shortly afterward.

The ride to that far-off city was a tiresome one to Rachel.

Philip Walton talked to her in an easy, soothing way with such earnestness, such a flush on his handsome face.

Something in his words struck her with pain. She turned her head in his direction and looked at him, wondering where she had seen and known this person before.

"Sometimes my heart is quite full. I will try to tell you of the great conflict which is going on there, but I fear I cannot," he was saying to her. "Many times when you were away from me, I thought of all I should say, Rachel, when I saw you next. A thousand thoughts came to me, a thousand words I longed to speak. And now that I have found you I am mute; my fancies leave me in the sweet reality of your presence. I cannot understand what this wonderful change means that comes over me. Can you, Rachel, tell me what it is? It must be some sweet secret!"

She looked past him, her face bright with a strange, indefinable tenderness, a far-away look in her eyes. She was thinking of something else, and she hardly knew what he was saying. She was murmuring to herself.

"I have no secrets from him," she said, wistfully—"from Paul. I would not like even the shadow of a secret between us; we have passed such happy days together—the happiest of my life! I never had a care or thought but that I loved to share with—my husband—dear, dear Paul! When I am away from him, do you know I love to sit and think over every word that he said to me. I love to dwell on all the pleasant and happy thoughts I ever had about Paul, my only love—when he first saw me, when

he admired me, and the time he told me—of—of his love for me! I think of him now as I did then. I have never thought or cared for anyone else that way!"

She clasped her hands together childishly, and whispered the words over again—those words that made the music of her life, even while the dark shadows were over it.

He heard her sigh, and he knew that her heart was beating fast with a passion of love and pain. He knew that, although she was talking to him, she did not recognise him—did not understand one word.

He could sit in that seat beside her, he could talk to her in his gentlest, most winning way, that no other woman had ever yet resisted, and yet nothing brought her heart nearer his own. There was only a sad, wistful, far-away look on the beautiful face, and he knew quite well what had called in there—it was love for Paul Verrell, from whom she was being separated.

"Indeed you will not forget him, Rachel. There is no deceit on your part," he thought, with covert sarcasm.

"Heaven was very good to me then. I was given my heart's desire," continued Rachel, a moment later, her eyes moistened with tears and adding,—

"I never remember to have been nervous in those happy days! Why am I so bewildered now?"

Philip Walton smiled as the beautiful eyes looked into his.

"I can tell you why," he replied. "You care more for him than he does for you, and that is sure to be the overshadowing of a great calamity."

"I cannot help it," she assented with a happy smile. "It is better to love him too much than not at all!"

Philip Walton thought differently; but he let her have her own ideas, not caring to alarm her.

CHAPTER L.

At one of the stopping places another person got in the carriage who recognised Rachel—and Philip Walton, too—a young woman who watched them with furtive glances, her lips parted in breathless eagerness, her face very pale beneath the thick folds of a veil that concealed it. The fashionably dressed beauty who was so heavily veiled was Daphne.

The behaviour of Philip Walton and Rachel toward each other puzzled Daphne. Why, they acted like mere acquaintances—strangers almost—these two whose names were on everyone's lips as having eloped together. Had they had a falling out already? Daphne told herself that she must know.

Daphne cordially detested Philip Walton. She had first met him at that memorable picnic which she had attended with Paul Verrell, and when he went back to town she managed to keep up a secret correspondence with him.

When Daphne had left the farm-house and Paul so quickly—upon hearing that his uncle had disinherited him—she drifted at once to London, and knowing that Philip Walton would not be apt to learn of anything that had taken place in the remote village which he seldom visited, she began a spirited flirtation with him. Just then Rachel had come upon the scene, a heart-broken, deserted bride, and young Walton proceeded to fall in love with Rachel.

It had not taken Daphne long to discover that she had a rival, and she was almost speechless with amazement and chagrin when she found out who her rival was.

She threatened a breach of promise suit that would startle the whole country, and to hush up the matter Philip Walton had paid the beautiful, heartless adventuress a handsome sum to drop the affair and go abroad. She had but recently returned, and since that time it was Paul Verrell whom she had hunted down to replenish her empty coffers.

The beauty lived on her wits. Every man who got into her toils was obliged to pay handsomely to get out of them.

Daphne detested Philip Walton with all the fury of a demon, because he had fallen in love with plain Rachel, and turned from herself.

To Daphne's surprise she saw Rachel suddenly leave her seat beside Walton and take one a few feet ahead.

Had they quarrelled? She *must* know.

Quick as thought she arose, and gliding across took the seat Rachel had so lately vacated.

"We meet again! How delightful!" she murmured, in a silvery voice. "Will you permit an old acquaintance to take this seat by your side for a station or so?"

That voice, that gesture! Philip Walton almost fell back dead when he heard it, the shock and the aversion that filled his soul were so great.

Many eyes were watching. He could not refuse her the request she asked, though he grated his teeth together with impotent rage as she took the seat beside him which she so coveted.

"Why are you here?" he cried in a voice of suppressed rage, his frame trembling with the terrible anger that consumed him. "Why are you here, I say?"

"Really, my dear Mr. Walton, it is evident you are not overpleased to see me; you are scarcely polite. But to answer your question,—I came back to Europe because I was running short of funds."

A muttered imprecation was ground out between his white teeth, which Daphne merely laughed at; and that wicked little laugh stung and tantalized him more than any words could have done.

"It is now my turn to ask you a question, my dear Philip," she whispered. "Where are you taking Rachel, may I inquire? Please don't deny it; the whole country is still ringing with the pretty story of the elopement. Let me advise you to temporize with me on this occasion; if you were to make an enemy of me I might take it in my head to arise here and now and cry out,—"

"Listen, good people! Here are the two elopers whom the detectives are scouring the country to find! What shall we do with them?"

Philip Walton drew back, white to the lips.

"You—you wouldn't dare make a scene of that kind," he gasped.

"Why not?" she demanded. "What is there to prevent me?"

"I would denounce you as an adventurer, a blackmailer, a woman who made her living by trading upon her wife—a fiend incarnate!" he said.

Daphne's eyes sparkled with a dangerous light.

"I could tell so much about you that people would be amazed," declared Daphne. "I add, it is far better to make a friend than an enemy of me. Come, tell me all about your elopement, and if you and Rachel have quarrelled already."

"I intended to tell you everything from the first, Daphne," he said, trying to steady his voice; "but you provoked me beyond reason."

"Men have not those quick intuitions," she said, sweetly. "That which a woman knows—discerns by instinct—you can never dissuade her from saying, though it pierce the dense brain and more solid heart of man."

"You are very bright, Daphne," he said, pleasantly. "I hope we will never be at sword-points with each other again. It is better for us to be friends, however; we can do a good turn for each other, and further our individual interests as well."

"Perhaps you have a scheme—something difficult that you want me to help you out with? You know I expect you to do handsomely by me if the compliment is to be returned," she said, naively, laughing in her charming fashion.

"I want you to come to my rescue, most certainly," he said, anxiously. "I am trying single-handed to win one of the greatest prizes, but the chances are all against me; perhaps, if I make it a money object to you, you will try your old powers of helping me out with it."

"When people get into a scrape with their eyes open I think it would be a good idea to let

them get out of it themselves; it would make them more careful in the future," replied Daphne, with provoking mirth.

"But I cannot see my way out of it; on the contrary, I am floundering deeper and deeper in its confounded meshes. I cannot stand it much longer."

"You have aroused my curiosity," she interposed. "Don't keep me in suspense. What is there for me to do?"

Philip Walton hesitated a moment, and in that moment his frail resolution was lost.

"I will make a confidante of you, Daphne," he said in deep agitation, "and it will be a veritable gold mine to you if you will follow out my instructions."

"Oh, my! a gold mine, eh? Name what it is—quick!" she said, eagerly, "and I'll carry it out for you, no matter what it is!"

"I will have to go back to when Rachel and I left her home," he said a little impatiently.

"She was as innocent of taking an improper step as a little child might have been at the time we started. I cannot go into details about her husband, but I understood that they had a misunderstanding that, however slight, was brought about by some designing creature. The breach widened, until finally he disappeared for a time. His young wife allowed her mind to dwell with such awful intensity upon his actions that she lost her reason—became mildly demented. Thinking she might become worse if she remained under that roof, a martyr to her sympathies and predilections, I watched for an opportunity to spirit her away. I had not long to wait. One fatal evening she came along the road, bag in hand, and was wandering off anywhere, away from her misery. I lifted her into a carriage I had in waiting, and drove rapidly away, she screaming and raving, until I was wild with perplexity. The thought occurred to me to place her in an insane asylum, and I executed the plan at once. I had scarcely left the village ere the asylum was burnt to the ground, and I believed truly that Rachel had perished in the flames and was lost to me for ever. I got on this train, and again fate was kind to me, for she came directly to my seat, bringing with her a ticket to Glasgow that the superintendent must have given her after placing her on this train, I surmise. She does not know me, but yet her reason is gradually returning to her; I can tell by the way she speaks of her husband. I am also sure that by the time she reaches her destination she will be entirely sane, and her mind will go back to her last scene with him."

"What is there in it for me?" she asked, anxiously.

"I am getting to it," he said. "I want a companion at the hotel in Glasgow for her. I will pay you a very large sum if you procure one for her; she must be with her constantly, and never lose a chance, night or day, to praise me, further my interests—in fact to help make her like me, and after that it will be an easy matter for me to secure her freedom by representing Paul Verrill as dead, and then win the hand of one of the most beautiful women in this wide world. You can name your own price, Daphne, if you can find one to carry this out."

"In that city I have a lady friend, who, I promise you, will be just the person to act as companion to her; who delights in hotel life, fine carriages, grand attire, and a little money; but you must pay me handsomely for arranging it."

So they concluded the pitiful bargain that was to weave such a cruel web round hapless Rachel's life—that was to crush her pure young heart until she prayed to die and end it all.

It was the first deep sleep that had visited that whirling brain for long, weary weeks. She slept so soundly that the passengers spoke to each other in uneasiness about it.

At last they decided it would be best to arouse the young lady. Then they grew alarmed when they discovered that their earnest efforts failed utterly to awaken the sleeper.

"Is there a doctor in the train?" someone asked.

Yes, there was a physician, and he responded to the call with alacrity. He made a hurried examination, a great number of the passengers standing eagerly by.

"It is an uncommon case," said the doctor, briefly. "There has been a great stress on the brain. I should say that the lady has not had one whole night's sleep through for many weeks. I think she has had some great sorrow which has come dangerously near upsetting her reason altogether. When she comes out of this lethargy she will be her usual self again. Nature is always kind, and always repairs damages in her own way where she has the slightest opportunity. I was called in once to see a patient, a young lady, who had slept continuously for one week. I feel confident this case will prove a similar one. I should advise that the young lady's effects be searched to learn her address," he added.

It was then that Daphne stepped forward.

"I had a few moments' conversation with this young lady after entering the train," said Daphne boldly, "and in the course of the conversation she was speaking of Glasgow, and among the friends she mentioned was a lady friend of mine—Miss Grant, I suggest she be taken there instead of a hospital."

"An excellent idea," chimed in Philip Walton, taking his cue from Daphne.

He was too cautious, however, to suggest that he would get a cab to take the unconscious girl to the place indicated.

He looked significantly into Daphne's eyes. No one saw the look of intelligence flash from the one to the other. She understood what he meant to tell her, and said aloud,—

"I pass within two doors of her destination. I will accompany her in her cab that far if you desire me to do so, I feel so sorry for her."

"Thank you, you are very kind, miss," returned the doctor. "I will gladly avail myself of your offer, seeing that the Miss Grant she is to be taken to is a mutual friend."

Philip Walton had just opportunity to catch the hurriedly whispered address as Daphne passed him, and to press, all unnoticed, a roll of bills into her willing hand.

Walton could scarcely conceal a chuckle of intense delight as he saw the carriage door close upon his helpless victim and escort.

The drive was not a long one, and they soon drew up before a red-brick house, the street and number Daphne had indicated.

A young woman gorgeously arrayed in very cheap finery and a showy plaid dress answered the bell.

"What, you here! Gracious, who—"

The question was not finished. Daphne gave her a broad wink that arrested the words on her lips, whispering in a low, shrill voice,—

"Hu—ah!—ah!"

Entering quickly, she closed the door after her, and the driver with his unconscious charge waited patiently until the beautiful, stylish young girl should make her appearance again.

Five minutes later she emerged upon the doorstep.

"My friend says, bring her in by all means," she said, sweetly. "She has gone to prepare a room for her. This way, please."

Rachel was brought into the house and up a narrow flight of stairs to a room on the floor above, which was so meagrely and so cheaply furnished that even the young man noticed it, thinking the friend of the lovely girl who had conducted them thither must be very poor indeed, and it puzzled him as to why she should deck herself out in such gaudy finery amidst such poor and cheerless surroundings; but as he had no excuse to linger longer he bowed himself out of the room, taking his departure.

CHAPTER LI.

PHILIP WALTON was quite right; the whirl, bustle, and confusion of the train were beginning to tell upon Rachel. Despite her great effort to keep her eyes open they drooped slowly but surely, until they were glued fast together in a deep, exhaustive sleep.

The door had scarcely closed after him ere the young woman turned quickly to Daphne.

"What new lark have you on hand now?" she demanded. "Who in the world is this girl whom you have brought here, and why have you brought her to me, I should like to know? I could not get head or tail to the story you were trying to tell me just before she was brought in."

Daphne laughed a harsh, metallic laugh. There was no need to keep on her mask of smiles and sweetness, so she deliberately dropped it.

"You did me a good turn once, Jennie Grant," she said, "and one good turn deserves another. I had a chance to put a little good luck in your way, and I simply improved the opportunity, that is all. But to the facts which you are so anxious to get to the bottom of."

"A friend of mine is in love with that pretty, statuesque creature, who, by the way, has just left her husband. As soon as her grief subsides he hopes to catch her indignant heart in the rebound, and wed her."

"His satanic majesty, who never forsakes his own, seems to have played directly into his hands. He finds himself—quite by the merest luck or accident, whichever you choose to call it—in the same train with the fleeing wife, though she did not know, or, rather, realise this, her brain was so dazed."

"To make a long story short, exhausted nature asserted itself, and she fell into a deep sleep on the train—it was quite a comatose state—from which all efforts of a doctor failed to arouse her."

"At this juncture I stepped up and said she had spoken of a mutual friend—a Miss Grant. Why not take her to her friend's house, instead of taking her to the hospital? My suggestion was acted upon, and—here she is."

"For the life of me I cannot see how all this is of the least interest to me," said Jennie Grant, impatiently. "I am certainly at sea, and in a fog at that."

"I am getting to that," said Daphne, with a cunning smile. "You are to say you sat in the seat beside her in the train, and, seeing her dilemma, had her brought to your home. Say that you are a wealthy young widow—or anything else you like—suggesting, if she is looking for a situation, you'd be pleased to engage her as a companion."

"Go to a fine hotel, you two, and live like two princesses. Your bills will be paid by the gentleman so anxious to win her. The only service required in exchange for the elegance you will be surrounded with will be to use your influence with the girl to marry him. Don't mention my name, or say that you know me. I am not to be brought into the scheme. Now do you see the point? I'm a friend worth having, to plan such a grand life for you. At the present moment you are a saleswoman, slaving your life out for scarcely enough to keep body and soul together. Living the life of an indolent woman of wealth will be a wonderful change for you."

"I can scarcely credit all you tell me," said Jennie Grant, hoarsely. "It seems too wonderful to be true."

"All you have to do, is to speak a good word for the gentleman in question, and try to influence her to marry him. I think you will succeed."

The woman's eyes sparkled. "If talk will do it he may rest assured it is as good as accomplished," she declared. "I always had a great deal of influence with those of my own sex with whom I have been brought in contact."

"Then you accept the charge?" asked Daphne. "I should say so," returned the woman, quickly. "All you have to do is to lay out the plan of action, I'll do the rest. She shall marry the gentleman, if I have to hypnotize her to make her do it."

CHAPTER LII.

FEARING lest Rachel should regain consciousness at any moment Daphne hurriedly left the house.

"Well, well, this is indeed a pretty go," Jennie Grant muttered, as she stood with arms akimbo,

watching the beautiful face that lay upon the pillow. And as she watched, the lovely dark eyes opened, Rachel struggled up to a sitting posture, looking in amazement about her. Then suddenly her eyes encountered the woman standing by her bedside.

"Where am I, and who are you?" she gasped, faintly.

"You're in the hands of a stranger who happened to be in the same train with you, and—"

Rachel started to her feet, staggering from the couch.

"Oh, I remember," she sobbed, wildly. "I saw Paul flying with—another, and it drove me mad—mad! I went up to my room, and packed a few things in my bag, and stole away towards the station to catch the train. I felt weak and ill as I hurried through the grounds. I must have fainted, for I cannot remember what happened after that. I do not know how I reached the train in which you say you saw me. All is a blank to me ever since."

"My dear child," said Jennie Grant, "you came in the train and sat just beside me. You had a ticket for the end of the route. You were taken very ill in the train, and they were about to send you to the hospital, but I interfered and had you sent to my home, for I have such a great dread of hospitals."

"Oh, you were so good," murmured Rachel.

Should she tell her the story that she was a deserted wife, and had fled from her home before her household and the whole world had heard of the elopement of her husband with another?

No—no! This lady might think it was her fault that her husband had left her, and she could not bear that.

She hid her face in her hands, sobbing as though her heart would break.

"I thank you for what you have done for me," said Rachel. "I am a stranger to you, but I cannot explain why I am in this great town all alone. I am going to find something to do, so that I can earn my daily bread."

"Fate was very good to send you to me," said Mrs. Grant, with a very captivating smile. "I was just looking out for a companion; I think you will suit me admirably if you would like to try it."

"I shall be only too happy, madam, to accept your kind offer," said Rachel, gravely. "I am very frank in stating that I do not know much about the duties of a companion, but I shall do my best."

"I am sure you'll suit. My name is Mrs. Grant," she went on. "I am a widow, and very rich."

Rachel was much surprised to hear this, for the surroundings of the room had not betokened even comfortable circumstances for its owner. Jennie Grant saw the look, and readily divined what was passing through Rachel's mind.

"You are in the servants' quarters of my home," she said; "they carried you into them by mistake. Gracious! my rooms down below are furnished in perfectly gorgeous style. The pile of the carpets is an inch deep, and the furniture is all upholstered in pink chiffon—oh, no! that isn't what I mean—it's pink satin and gold; and then I have a lot of those nude marble figures around—they cost a pile of money—and the pictures in great broad gilt frames, and the looking glasses are something scrumptious. I've got a terribly old wrapper on, but I'll tell you how that occurred: My maids—you see, I have two of them—were about to give my poodle-dog his daily bath—I always prefer to see to that myself, though, for fear that they might handle my poor dear pet Fido roughly. But as for dresses, bless you! I've got the costliest kind of them in the trunks—I don't mean trunks—wardrobes. I'll show them to you some of these fine days. I'm a rich widow, I am, with money galore. We live at fine hotels, and have the best the land can furnish."

There was something about this lady which Rachel did not quite like, which caused her to shrink from her. But any port in a storm is welcome to a shipwrecked mariner, and Rachel was glad to accept the offer of a position which would bridge over the sorrows of the present.

"You must take a cup of tea," she said, as

Rachel sunk down weakly in the nearest seat. "I'll make it for you in a trice, or—er, rather, I'll order my servants to make it. Just you sit here as contented as you can, and I'll be back before you can say Jack Robinson!"

With these words she hurried out of the room.

"What a strange lady she is," thought Rachel, wonderingly. "I cannot understand her." Then her thoughts turned to her own great sorrow. "It was best that I came away," she moaned. "I could never have faced it."

Her heart grew cold and bitter toward Paul and Daphne, who had wrecked her young life. She did not curse them, she told herself; she would leave that to Heaven.

She thanked Heaven she was among strangers who did not know of her sad story. While she was ruminating over the bitter past, and wondering how she should look the future in the face, Mrs. Grant returned with the toast and tea, looking very much flushed, as if she had superintended personally the making of the toast.

"You had better eat all you can of that," said Mrs. Grant, "for—" She stopped short in embarrassment, and the rest of the sentence remained unuttered. "You have been crying since I left you," she said, looking sharply into the other's tear-stained face. "If you're going to be my companion I want you to be bright and cheerful. If you have any trouble no good ever comes of thinking and brooding over it. Try to forget it just as quickly as you can."

"I will do my best," said Rachel, piteously.

Jennie Grant felt very curious to learn the full particulars of the new-comer's history, believing that there was something which Daphne had kept from her. But Rachel would not speak of her past.

"If you take me to be your companion it must be without references, for I have none to give."

"I am satisfied. Your face is recommendation enough for me," declared Jennie Grant, pompously. "We will both occupy this room to-night," she added. "My elegant suites of boudoirs are being repaired. Once in awhile a lady does have to enroach upon the servants' quarters in case of emergency."

"To be sure," said Rachel.

"I have had to use these rooms for the last two days. That's the reason I am so anxious to get to the hotel as soon as I can. We are going there to-morrow morning, if everything turns out all right."

In the morning Mrs. Grant again went to superintend the toast and coffee, coming back looking so flushed that Rachel felt sure the lady must have made it with her own hands.

After this slight repast was disposed of, Mrs. Grant said that her carriage would be at the door in a few moments to take them shopping.

"I don't see what can have detained James," she said, running to the window every few minutes. "You see, I have only just hired a new coachman a few days ago. I don't understand him yet, and he don't understand me. Oh, here he is now!" she exclaimed. "Put on your things, Miss—Miss Verrell, and we'll have a fine ride."

They soon entered the vehicle, which looked to Rachel very much more like a public hack than a private conveyance.

Mrs. Grant settled back in her seat with an air of great delight.

"This is what I call living," she declared, "having your carriage to step into without having to walk so much as a foot, if you don't want to."

To Rachel, who had always been used to having her own conveyance, even on the farm, this seemed so very strange. Suddenly she started forward.

"Dear me!" she cried. "I wanted that crazy juckanapes to stop at the nearest linen-draper's and he's rattling faster than ever past them all. Hold on there!" she cried, attempting to open the door and shout out to him.

But the door would not yield. She did not understand how to turn the handle of the knob.

"Why don't you use the speaking tube?" said Rachel.

"The what?" asked Mrs. Grant, sharply.

"The speaking tube," said Rachel, quietly. "Here, you give the order to stop at the first large blackdraper's," said Mrs. Grant, flushing with mortification.

Rachel reached over calmly and whistled through the tube, giving the order in a low, clear voice.

The man touched his cap, and obeyed with alacrity. Mrs. Grant watched with much curiosity.

"I declare!" she said. "I never thought that pesky thing was a speaking-tube. I have owned this carriage for four or five years, and I never saw that in it till now. I've been so used to opening the door and speaking out what I wanted."

Again Rachel looked at her companion in wonder.

(To be continued).

EDITH ELLISMORE'S BRAVERY.

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(Continued from page 489.)

CHAPTER VII.

Those few days that had been full of such agony to Edith Ellismore had held for Lady Helen Lockhart much the same portion. She had effected a compromise—she might perhaps say she had, at least for the time, conquered her son.

But such conquests, effected only by extremest demands on the conquered, bring but little real triumph.

Dallas did not intentionally change to her—he was as affectionate, as attentive as before, but she felt a change, and worse still, saw that he was unhappy, proudly as he concealed all signs that others might have seen.

If all her scheming, done for his sake, brought no good to him, and indeed estranged him, what use was it?

Was her youth to be repeated in his—he to walk on thorns she was spreading before him—he with whose birth light had come back to her after the long eclipse, the first touch of whose baby hands had melted the hardness that had been like stone?

Yet she feared the world. What would it, what could it say, if she gave up what the law made hers?—and these things leaked out.

On the other hand, if she suffered Dallas to leave her—to earn his own living, again that dreaded, unscrupulous tongue would be busy.

True, it might say no worse than that he had over-stepped limits, and she had drawn the reins too tight, which could not hurt much, either mother or son; but in the end she yielded, the two things would be put together somehow—the links would be seen and fitted.

But though these reasons weighed with her very much, above all was the fact that Dallas was unhappy, and that the chief cause of that unhappiness was, not his separation from Edith—that could not last if he succeeded in work—but herself. To reinstate herself in his high opinion became an absorbing idea.

Dallas, on his return from Harlow, did not open the subject immediately. Living in the whirl of society there were claims on both that made it not always easy to secure privacy; besides, Lady Helen avoided a tête-à-tête and her position as mother and mistress of the house made Dallas rather at her mercy.

So the days passed on rapidly, till near the end of the stipulated time. By then her mind was made up; her position was well-nigh intolerable, and she determined to place herself in her son's hands.

He, sitting idly one evening at his piano, received a message through a servant that "my lady wanted to see him in her own boudoir."

Lockhart shut the piano, and stood still, with the blood turning cold in his veins; then he went upstairs straight to his mother's room.

She had been pacing up and down, with hands never for an instant still, and her eyes turned

constantly to the door in a strained gaze; but when her son came in she cried out wildly,—

"Oh, Dallas, my child! my son!" and stretched out her arms to him.

He was locked to her breast, and it was not alone her fast flowing tears that wetted his cheek. No thought of self dimmed the purity of his rejoicing—even Edith was half forgotten in the rush of the earlier love.

"I cannot bear it," his mother said, still weeping so passionately that he grew half frightened. "I will do anything you tell me, if you will only be happy and love me again."

He pressed her face against hers with a broken whisper,—

"Mother, I always loved you, nothing—no one could have made me happy, save yourself."

He made her sit down, then placed himself beside her, still keeping one arm round her.

"Tell me what I am to do, Dallas," she said. "It is Edith's—let her have it all."

"No mother, that cannot be. She will not take it. I saw her more than a week ago—she wrote to me, and I went down."

"Will not take it? But she must. I cannot keep it, and you two to be parted."

"Listen, mother, dear—we are not parted. She is so grieved at having sent me away at all that she will not touch a penny. I could not make her consent. She could not endure to make further division between you and me. Nor was I to leave you. I said I could not promise that."

"Oh, Dallas, would you have gone?"

"I don't know," said the young man, in a low voice. "I could not decide. Edith wanted things to remain as they were—to waive her right. A moral right cannot be waived, and I told her it was impossible."

"You must make her have it, Dallas—she will be your wife, and hers can be yours, but not mine."

"She would not hear of that either, mother; but she will not gainay the only alternative—and because there was no other way I was forced to lay it before her. Settle all but what my father left you on me. That is the only thing to be done."

"But you, Dallas, so proud?"

"Someone must stand in the breach, mother, and it is my place," said Lockhart, and his smile had a tinge of sadness in it. "I could not do it unless Edith shared it with me—she will do that if only to spare that pride of mine."

"It is not the way you would have chosen, Dallas, is it?"

"It saves the world's talk."

"Ah, if I had thought of you as much as you have thought of me!" said Lady Helen. "It was all a wretched quarrel between her father and me—too paltry to wreck our lives on, but neither would yield."

"Poor mother!" said Dallas, tenderly. "You will be happier now. Thank Heaven, you have come back to me. I would have spoken days ago, but I could never see you."

"I know, Dallas. I would not give you the opportunity. I am not sorry—it ought to come from me. Well, then, see that it is done. Nothing is more likely than for me to settle property on you at your marriage. I am glad Edith gave way—bring her to me soon. Oh, Dallas, if I could undo the past!"

"Hush, mother darling, all is forgiven," said Lockhart, soothing her; "you would have yielded all. Remember it is Edith and I who have checked you."

It was late in the evening before they separated, she telling him much of the past; and as it seemed to relieve her, he let her talk, notwithstanding his pain. Then there were details of the transfer, to be put before her and arranged; and after all that was settled Dallas saw her up to the door of her room, and went to his own with an unutterably thankful heart.

Once more in the old Croft—the Croft that is the same, but somehow looks a good deal changed. The furniture is old-fashioned, but it is not old, and painter and cleaner have plainly been busy inside and out. Yet it is not spoilt—it is as picturesque as ever, standing embedded

in the woods, and two bright eyes cast all over it looking approvingly at it; and the owner of the eyes, hat in hand, runs through the rose-covered porch, and straight into the kitchen.

"Oh, Alice, isn't it jolly to be home again!" she says, flinging her arms first round her old nurse and then embracing William also. "We only came yesterday, and we've just walked over from Willingham this morning to see how they had got on with the repairs, because mother and some people are coming to stay."

Alice looks over her darling's pretty head to see the other part of the "we"—and there he is, tall and handsome, and laughing at this identical moment. Then after the greetings Edith goes all over the house with Rover after her, and into the garden, and the boat-house, where lies the dear *Water-Lily*, and the girl steps back to her husband's side and puts her hand in his with a look from her great dark eyes.

"It was just here," she says, as they stand on the tangled path, and the waters, shadowed here by the trees, flow consciously past them; "Dallas, you won't have this path altered?"

"No, darling," he answers; "but you know I couldn't. This is your house, and always was—"

"I forgot; but that makes no difference, only I couldn't bear for this path to be in the least changed. Oh, those days—how happy I was!"

"Are the happy days all over then, my bride of a month?" Lockhart asks, laughing at her.

She stands looking down into the river with a perfectly grave face, and then puts both her little hands on her husband's arm, drawing quite close to him.

"No!" she says, very gently, "I hope they are just beginning."

[THE END.]

MR. ST. AUBYN'S FALSE MOVE.

—102—

I AM spending the summer at one of the pleasantest and most romantic spots which can be imagined to exist in Derbyshire.

It adds the charm of the quaintness of an elder generation to the sprightliness and civilisation of the present one.

Under the hospitable roof which shelters me there is a dear old lady—my friend Elva's grandmother—who knows all the families for miles around, and can tell me many an interesting tale of the days before Elva was born.

This morning cards came for a country wedding, and set the whole family into a ripple of excited expectation.

For an affair like this now upon the tapis is no more like one of the stiff formal London weddings than a cluster of grapes picked while the dew is still on them is like the bunch of raisins which also once was nursed by the sun and showers as it hung upon the parent vine.

The young couple who are to be married are named respectively Grace Vandeleur and Herbert Faunthorpe, and they are called the handsomest of the several engaged pairs in the neighbourhood.

Grace lives in the finest place for miles around. It is a large imposing-looking house, and has a lawn at its right roomy enough to accommodate the young folk in the various amusements which have become popular among them of late.

Lawn tennis, and a target for archery practice, each has its place, as well as its votaries among the members of the large family of brothers and sisters which is now to invade it, by chance, for the first time since little Eva—Grace's youngest sister—has reached her teens.

At the left of the house a flower-garden occupies a large space, laid out in the mathematical squares and triangles which characterised the arrangement of flower-beds in old-fashioned times, and which Mr. Vandeleur will not suffer to be altered, in memory of his mother, who had superintended its laying out when she had come a bride to her new home.

In front a fountain throws up its sparkling spray from a huge velvety oval of close-shaven grass, around which circles the gravelled sweep which leads to the entrance.

I had seen Grace Vandeleur at church the day before, and had been so struck by her fresh young beauty as to "rave about it on my return, according to Cousin Elva, though if that be "raving," what can the genuine article be!

Elva's grandma was sitting beside me when the invitations were brought in. I had expressed a laudable ambition of which grandma approves cordially.

It was to learn to knit. And as I am to be her pet grandson's wife, it pleases the dear old lady that her Frank stands a chance of still being made comfortable with the work of loving hands, when her own shall be folded in their last rest.

She doesn't know that I have the key to the pleasure which made her brown eyes brighten into a semblance of their girlish fire when she first heard the "school-marm" (myself) broach such a sensible desire.

But grandma's sweet, old face is like an open book to me whereon all beautiful thoughts are legibly written.

So I know her little secret.

She listens thoughtfully as Elva opens one of the cream-white envelopes and reads its contents aloud.

"Strange, isn't it, daughter," she says, turning to Elva's mother, "that Howard St. Aubyn's last remaining child is to be buried the day of Grace Vandeleur's wedding feast. If ever a man has received his punishment in this world it is he."

I had heard of the death of Amy St. Aubyn in the foreign land to which her father had gone with her in search of health, and knew that the steamer was even now bearing her inanimate body back to her native shores; but beyond that I had heard nothing of the St. Aubyn family history.

But from what grandma said I drew the inference that something interesting lay behind her words, and I made a mental note of them, intending to get at their meaning the first time I had her all to myself.

In the excitement of getting ready for such an important event as a wedding at Vandeleur Hall I forgot to speak of Mr. St. Aubyn during the days which intervened between the reception of the invitations and the time appointed for the ceremony.

Then it was brought back to my mind with a shock; for, just as the bridal pair had entered the carriage which was to convey them away—while the bevy of laughing bridesmaids stood upon the broad terrace to shower rice and good wishes upon the young couple, and as stately Mrs. Vandeleur, who, although mother of the bride, looked handsome and youthful enough to be her sister, was standing beside her husband gazing wistfully at the child who henceforth must give the first place in her heart to another—a sable funeral train passed slowly by; and as the carriage, containing one solitary mourner—the dead girl's father—reached a spot just opposite the happy group, the closely-drawn curtains yielded to a sudden gust of wind and were blown back, disclosing for an instant the childless widower's dark, grief-stricken face.

Unconsciously he raised his eyes, and, as they rested on Mrs. Vandeleur's face, she in turn looked at him, her velvety cheeks paling suddenly, as though she had seen a spectre instead of a man as rich in the honours of the world as he was singularly poverty-stricken in all that makes life truly happy; for he was now alone—wifeless and childless amid the ruins of his happiness.

As the carriage passed Mr. Vandeleur drew nearer to his wife and put his arm with lover-like tenderness about her, and as she looked up into his face I saw that tears were in her eyes.

"Howard has paid dearly for my mistake, Grace; but do not let it cast a shadow over us to-day!"

Mrs. Vandeleur tried to smile.

"It seems so dreadful, Edward. Had his children lived he would have had as many as we have. And to look about upon our fine, strong

boys, and at Grace and Elva, and to think of having not one single one left! It is heart-breaking!"

"I knew Howard St. Aubyn would be punished, it was inevitable. But come, your guests will think we are following Grace and Herbert's example, and are making love to each other. We must attend better to our social duties, Mrs. Vandeleur," and, with a smile that spoke volumes, he left his wife's side, and moved again among the merry groups scattered about.

"Grandma, why does everyone say that Mr. St. Aubyn's misfortunes are a punishment?" I asked that evening.

"Howard St. Aubyn was once engaged to Grace Vandeleur's mother. She was then Grace Fane, and was the pride of the village on account of her beauty and goodness. But she was not rich in this world's goods, and when a wealthy old man died and left all his property to an only daughter Howard broke his engagement with Grace to marry the heiress.

"Grace's mortification and disappointment worked together to throw her into a brain fever, and she nearly died, rising from her sick bed the pale shadow of what she had been.

"Dr. Vandeleur, then a rising young physician, was her doctor, and he fell in love with her. But it was a long time before she would listen to him, though at last his faithful devotion was rewarded, first by her gratitude, then by her liking.

"I don't think it was love at first, but Dr. Vandeleur was glad to win her for his wife and trust to the future to bring her into the full reciprocation of his affection.

"He was repaid. For I never saw a happier couple than they are now, and have been for years.

"There was a clause in the old Mr. Martin's will that if his daughter left no children, all his property should revert to the benefit of his native place.

"Strange to say the number of children which were born to her were five—just the same with Grace's. But they were puny from birth, and only Amy lived to grow to maturity. As you know, it was her funeral which passed by on Grace Vandeleur's wedding-day.

"So the riches which caused Howard St. Aubyn to marry a girl he did not love, and almost break the heart of the one whom he really cared for—as much as such a selfish man could—will all revert to the village.

"It was a mercenary match, and now he has lost even the money for which he bartered his happiness.

"Don't you see, child! That is his punishment, and almost everyone feels that it is a just one. What do you think about it?"

I went into a brown study for a few minutes, out of which grandma's voice aroused me.

"What makes you look so sober, dear?"

"I was thinking how sad it is that the innocent must suffer for the guilty. Poor little Amy St. Aubyn! So young, and with so many hopes clustering about her life, and yet she was sacrificed for her father's sin."

"That is according to the Bible, child."

"Grandma," I said, impulsively, "for the first time in my life I feel glad that I am not rich. For who knows what other inheritance might have accompanied the money?"

Grandma took off her spectacles and looked at me with a benignant smile.

"Don't go to the opposite extreme, dear. Riches do very well in their place, only don't put them first. It is the abuse of this world's good things, not their proper use, that does the harm."

And I suppose grandma is right in that conclusion, as she is in everything else.

SIMPLE PICTURE FRAMES.—Bare walls give to a room a cold, cheerless air, and in the absence of fine works of art they might be covered with pretty etchings or engravings. Good oil paintings are expensive and poor ones are abominations, but wood-cuts, etchings and engravings may be culled from magazines and picture-papers and framed at trifling expense. A very pretty set of frames was recently made by a lady. She made frames of pasteboard the size of the picture, and then pasted on rows of maple leaves. The leaves were small sized, and of a very green tint. An application of varnish was put on and the pictures hung with dark green cords on a library wall. The effect is very pretty, the cardboard being cut out in the shape of the leaves. China cabinets are prized by all young housekeepers, but when purchased they cost more money than many can afford. To make one at home take a peach crate, and have it painted black, then varnish. End the edges and shelf with dark red velvet and nail to the wall by a few invisible nails. The china and *bric-a-brac* may be artistically arranged on this, and no one can detect its being home made. Sometimes two extra shelves are put in the crate, and these may be taken from another crate or fitted in by a carpenter.

THE STAGE FOOL.—To very many, even well-informed people, who go to the theatre, the constant presence of a fooler jester in Shakespearean drama, and the frequent allusion to such an individual when absent, must be somewhat of a puzzle. The real fact is, that in England, as well as on the Continent, fools were considered necessary adjuncts at court and in the retinues of families of consequence. They were authorized wits, who could crack jokes, without fear of the consequences, upon everyone with whom they came in contact, from the sovereign to the subject, and in the former case upon weaknesses and foibles at which no courtier or counsellor dare even hint. That quaint old churchman, Dr. Fuller, speaking of the court jester, says, "That it is an office which none but he that hath wit will undertake." Under these circumstances how the fools were secured is something we cannot understand. These attendants upon the court continued until quite a late period. Muckle John, the fool of Charles I., and the successor of Archie Armstrong, is, perhaps, the last regular personage of this class to be found in English history, though wits like Captain Morris, and even Sheridan, were regular bangers-on of royalty in the days of George IV., almost within our own memory.

DOMESTIC LIFE.—Housekeeping has its trials, no doubt; but systematic work, and a determination not to fret over little things, will go far towards lightening them. Every woman should make it the aim and purpose of her life to attain perfection in her home. A day for mending, a day for washing, another for ironing, for sewing, and so on, and at once the work becomes simplified and less of a hardship. "Oh, dear me, to-morrow is washing day! How I hate it!" This is a common saying, and there is nothing very wrong about it, for no one will assert that washing is an agreeable pastime. Yet it must be done, so it is worse than useless to fret over it; as a consequence every sensible woman should determine to look on the bright side of the wash-tub and soap-suds. Make a few good rules and keep them. Determine not to put the whole house in disorder and to make everyone else miserable, because the clothes must be washed, the bread baked, &c. Suppose dinner is to be served at a certain hour, and dear husband forgets all about it and arrives in the best of humour when everything is cold. Don't cry and scold, but make the best of it. He will enjoy his cold meat if hot words are not served with it. We all know women who are constantly finding fault with something or other, and who are never happy unless there is something to scold about. But every such little worry, every harsh word, every disagreeable look, makes life harder, and but deepens the lines of trouble about the eyes and mouth. There are plenty of real troubles to be met with, without allowing household cares to become a source of torment.

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FACETIÆ.

CUSTOMER: "The missus wants some eggs very bad." New Clerk: "I—I don't think we have any very bad eggs, ma'am."

MISS GOSPEL: "Do you pay much attention to what your husband says?" Mrs. Jealous: "Not unless he talks in his sleep."

TOM: "Up your references! Why, you must have been crazy." "Shure and you wouldn't have thought so if you had seen the riferences."

AUNT MARY: "Well, Bobby, have you had all you want?" Bobby (heaving a sigh): "I've had all I can eat, but I haven't had all I want."

At a trial recently the jury returned the following verdict:—"Guilty, with some little doubt as to whether he is the man."

CARLYLE says: "Laughter means sympathy." This will bring comfort to the man who has inadvertently trodden on orange peel.

"I say, mother, will you speak to Sammy?" "What's he doing now?" "Well, every time I hit him on the head with daddy's walking-stick he hollers."

FATHER (solemnly): "This thrashing is going to hurt me more than you, Reginald." Reggie (sympathetically): "Well, don't be too rough on yourself, dad; I ain't worth it."

AARON: "We laid dher gornor-sdone ohf dher synagogue de other day, Moses." Moses: "Vat you put in it—coins?" Aaron: "Not so, Moses. Ve put in cheques instead of coins."

AFTER DINNER ORATOR: "Unprepared as I am—unprepared as I—er—as—" His Wife (to him across the table): "Why, Tom, you had it all by heart this afternoon. Go on, do."

YOUNG LADY (in "rational" dress): "Take my seat, please." Old Lady (near-sighted, but grateful): "Thank you, sir. You are the only gentleman in the tram."

TOMMY: "When I'm a man I'm going to be a soldier!" Mother: "What! And be killed by the enemy?" Tommy: "Oh, well, then I guess I'll be the enemy."

An indiscreet man confided a secret to another, and begged him not to repeat it. "It's all right," was the reply; "I will be as close as you were."

DARWINIAN THEORY: There is a boy in the city who "sprang from a monkey." The monkey belonged to an organ-grinder and attempted to bite the boy.

A MUSICAL journal has an elaborate article for amateur vocalists. "How to Begin to Sing." How to get them to leave off when once they begin is still an unsolved problem.

"What object do you see?" asked the doctor. The young man hesitated a few moments, and then replied: "It appears like a jackass, doctor, but I rather think it is your shadow."

MR. FROG: "You should remember, my son, that there is nothing attained without labour. You need not expect to get something for nothing." Tommy: "I get lots of licks for nothing, anyhow."

A TEACHER'S ADVANTAGE—Usher (sternly): "You lazy rascal! I don't see that answer in the book. What will you be when you are a man?" Pupil: "I can be a teacher—an' always look in the book—boo-heo!"

MRS. TROUBADOUR: "I shall be away from home the greater part of the day, as I have joined the Society for the Suppression of Needless and Nerve-Racking Noises." Mr. T.: "Good idea, my dear. Take the baby along with you."

MRS. WOODS: "What's the reason that presidents always appoint newspaper men for private secretaries?" Mr. Wiggins: "Well, you know there is a good deal of writing to do, and—" "Oh, yes. I forgot about the messages."

CLERKLEY: "Isn't this earlier than your usual time for going home?" Barkley: "Yes, but my wife said if I came out by the 3.45 she'd meet me with the carriage." "I didn't know you kept a horse and carriage." "Er—or—it's a baby and carriage."

"You see," said a lawyer, in summing up a case, where one party had sued the other on a transaction in coal: "the coal should have gone to the buyer." "Not so," said the judge; "it should have gone to the cellar."

"No, sir," exclaimed Filkinson, "I would not tell a lie to save my life." "To save your life?" repeated Fogg, "neither would I; but lies do not always save life. Remember your friend, Aunias, and tremble."

ASKEM: "Where's the rich heiress you're engaged to?" Tellum: "You see that lovely girl in pink at the other side of the room?" "Yes. I say, old man, what a superb—" "Well, it isn't she. It's that grand old ruin in yellow sitting next her."

OLD GENTLEMAN: "It is folly to talk of marriage for years yet. My daughter is a mere child. She knows nothing about the world, and could not manage servants." Mr. Slimpurs: "Oh! that needn't make the slightest difference. We sha'n't have any."

"What's the matter with you, Pat? You lean forward like a man with the spinal complaint." "Och, it's nothin', yer honour, on'y that I was compelled to borrow a shirt from me hunchbacked brother, an' it's niver a soul can git the bulge out of it, so they can't."

"No," said a fond mother, speaking proudly of her twenty-five-year-old daughter; "no, Mary isn't old enough to marry yet. She cries when any one scolds her, and until she becomes hardened enough to talk back vigorously she isn't fit for a wife."

SHE: "Did you hear me in that last song?" Mr. Cute: "I did." "It is a favourite song of mine." "I have probably heard it a thousand times, but never before have I heard it sung as you sang it to-night." And as she moved proudly on, he added, sotto voce: "And I pray Heaven that I never may again."

A SUNDAY-SCHOOL teacher was giving a lesson on Ruth. She wanted to bring out the kindness of Boaz in commanding the reapers to drop large handfuls of wheat. "Now, children," she said, "Boaz did another very nice thing for Ruth; can you tell me what it was?" "Married her!" said one of the boys.

BRIDGET said a lady to her domestic, "where is the dustpan?" "With the broom, ma'am." "And where is the broom?" "With the dustpan, ma'am." "Well, Bridget, tell me—where are they both?" "They are both together, ma'am. 'Pears like you're almighty particular to-day."

AT AN EVENING PARTY.—A gentleman to a lady seated beside him: "Who is that homely young lady leaning against the mantelpiece?" "That is my daughter, sir!" "Oh, I beg your pardon; I mean the young lady seated in the arm-chair." "That is my other daughter." "I might have known it!" said the gentleman, in despair.

"So you do not want my poem?" the poet inquired breezily. "No," the editor replied, without looking up from his writing. "I see," said the poet; "too poor to buy good verses." "Sir!" the editor exclaimed angrily. "Oh, that's all right. You needn't get warm about it; poverty's no disgrace." Then he sailed jauntily out.

GENTLEMAN (to a tobaccoist): "Have you any of the X Y Z brand in stock? How are they?" Tobaccoist: "First-class, sir. This last lot is an extremely fine one." Gentleman (departing): "Thanks! You wrote to say they were very poor, but I am pleased to find you were mistaken. I am the manufacturer. Good-day!"

A PERSON recently met a Liverpool lady who is distinguished as having been four times a widow, and has now again entered the bonds of matrimony. Said the friend: "I think I once had the pleasure of dining with you in Paris!" "When?" asked the fair stranger. "In 1876," he replied. "Ah!" she said, reflectively, "that may have been so, but I had forgotten it. You see," she added, "it was two or three husbands ago."

"Is Mrs. Harkins at home?" asked the caller. "Physically, madam," returned the Educated Butler, "she is. As an abstract question the fact cannot be denied. But, in relation to your desire to see her, I cannot say definitely until I have ascertained Mrs. Harkins's wishes in the matter. Pray be seated until I have received advices from above."

THE FAT ONE: "Sir, I want to know what you mean by saying I could take my collar off over my head without unbuttoning it!" The Thin One: "It was a thoughtless statement on my part, made on the spur of the moment, and I am sorry I said it. 'Very well, if you are sorry, of course—'" "Yes; I forgot the size of your ears."

SOME years ago a farmer's barn in the vicinity of Worcester was struck by lightning, and burned to the ground. Many of the citizens had gone to see the fire, when a lipping booby met the celebrated Dr. G—n, and accosted him in this wise: "'Can you—ah, tell me, doctah, how fah they have succeeded in extinguishing the conflagration of the—ah, unfortunate fellah's barn?" The doctor eyed the individual attentively, and then, slipping his thumb and finger into his waistcoat pocket, took out a couple of pills and handed them to him, saying: "Take these, sir, and go to bed; and if you do not feel better in the morning, call at my surgery."

He was accosted while crossing a stile by a number of students who, well-knowing their man, challenged him to test his proficiency in Latin. The challenge was at once accepted by the scholar, who wrote on the stile for their interpretation the mystic words: "Foras est stilo." Seeing the students embarrassed over the words, he volunteered to accept their translation the day following, when he would return the same way. They sought the aid of their professors, but to no purpose; the words remained a sealed book. The next day he returned to find his friends absent. He proceeded to the stile, and with four strokes revealed the mystic words. Some time afterwards the students returned to the stile, and in utter bewilderment read: "For asses to sit on!"

It was on a ferry-boat plying between Sydney and Manly, one of that city's beautiful suburbs. Every seat was occupied. Each occupant felt the influence, and prepared for an enjoyable trip, when a lank girl of fifteen appeared, dragging by the hand a screaming child. There she stood, glowering. A mild lady suggested the child might be in pain. An old bachelor muttered that people who had charge of children should keep them at home. Low-voiced but distinct imprecations were now rife. She took not the slightest heed of the muttering or the bawling, which were now at the highest pitch, till the suggestion was offered that medicine would do it good. Then she arose in her wrath, as it were, and, giving the child a vigorous shake, said: "Echel, cry as loud as you like. I've paid your fare!"

SQUIRE BORGES is wealthy, and wishes his friends to understand that he is a wonderful sportsman. Last winter he started on a fishing trip, where he met with poor success. The first thing he did on returning to the city was to go to a market and buy fifteen trout. They were beauties, and he told the salesman what he was going to do, and asked him where he should say they were caught. "Oh, tell them they were taken from Linus Pond." On his way home the squire called and had the largest one photographed. Underneath the picture he wrote,—"One of the fifteenth taken from Linus Pond, January 8th, 1896." In two days he came back to the market-man and said,—"Looker here, where is Linus Pond? They asked me where it was, and I told them it was up in Northumberland. Then they got a map and wanted me to show it to them, and for the life of me I couldn't find it. Just tell me where it is, and I'll go home and fix them. Confound their hearts, I'll tell them where Linus Pond is, and give them enough of it." Then the market-man gently led him outside the shop and pointed to his sign. It read: "Linus Pond. Fish, oysters, and game."

SOCIETY.

The Queen will probably leave Windsor on the afternoon of Monday, the 9th inst., arriving at Cuxes on the morning of Thursday, the 12th.

The Emperor of Russia has invited Colonel Welby, Royal Scots Greys, of which his Imperial Majesty is Colonel-in-chief, to be present at his coronation in May next.

The Empress Dowager Dagmar of Russia will remain on the Riviera until Easter, when she is to join the Danish royal family for the wedding of Princess Louise of Denmark.

ONE of the consequences of the death of Prince Henry of Battenberg, is that his little daughter, Princess Victoria Eugenie Eva, will not act as bridesmaid to her cousin, Princess Maud. This will reduce their number to six, or at most seven.

In Danish Court circles it is authoritatively stated that the Princess of Wales and her daughters will arrive in Copenhagen in the first week in April, in order to attend the wedding of the Princess Louise and Prince Frederick Charles of Hesse. Prince Carl will by that time have returned from his West Indian cruise.

ACCORDING to present arrangements the first Drawing Room is to be held at Buckingham Palace during the second week in March (after the Queen's departure for the Continent) by the Princess of Wales, who will be assisted by Princess Louise. It is not yet decided whether there is to be a second Drawing Room before Easter, but there are to be four altogether, of which, in any case, two will be held early in May.

We are to have a Royal visitor with us in the spring in the person of the ex-Queen Liliuokalani. It may be remembered that this hapless sovereign was one of England's guests at the time of Her Majesty's jubilee; but her coming this year will be attended with far less pomp and circumstance than on that occasion, as she has now, of course, been thrust out of her kingdom, and is, at present, still a prisoner.

It is an open secret that the Queen has bequeathed the Osborne estate to Princess Beatrice, and the fact that in time to come her Royal Highness will probably reside principally in the Isle of Wight is the true reason for Prince Henry being buried at Whippingham. The Queen has granted to Princess Beatrice a large double suite of apartments in Kensington Palace. These are the rooms which were occupied by the Duke and Duchess of Kent (the Queen was born in one of them), by the Duke of Sussex and the Duchess of Inverness, and later on, by the Duke and Duchess of Teck.

THE Czar has already, it is said, signed the pardon of the Grand Duke Michael Michailovich, who had been disgraced by the late Alexander III. for marrying the Comtesse de Torby without authorisation. He will resume his place in the Imperial Guards, and will take part in the Coronation. Orders have already been given for certain medals to be struck commemorative of this same Coronation, which will be presented to all persons officially invited to take part in it, and worn by them during the *fiêtes*. These medals will be in gold for foreign representatives, in silver for the Russian officers, and in bronze for the troops who will take part in the procession.

It is announced that the Czar and Czaritsa will make a long visit this year to the Danish Court. The Imperial couple will be accompanied by the Dowager Empress and by several Grand Dukes and Grand Duchesses. They will arrive in Denmark at the end of the month of August, on board the new Imperial yacht, *Standart*, the largest yacht in the world, which at present is being built at Copenhagen. The Imperial family will stay with the Sovereigns at the Castle of Fredensborg. It is also assured from authentic sources that the Czar and Czaritsa will not, either before or after their stay at Copenhagen, pay a visit to the German Court at Berlin.

STATISTICS.

SIXTEEN ounces of gold are sufficient to gild a wire that would encircle the earth.

ON January 1st, 1896, the armies of the world contained 4,208,000 men.

A RACE-HORSE galloping at full speed clears from twenty to twenty-four feet every bound.

ASIA is the most populous quarter of the globe; it is reckoned to contain five hundred millions of people.

GEMS.

SENSE shines with a double halo when set in humility.

CENSURE is the tax a man pays to the public for being eminent.

THE tongue of a fool is the key of his council, which in a wise man wisdom hath in keeping.

NATURALLY we become sour and crabbed when we are not appreciated and when things go ill with us. To be misunderstood by friends, to suffer earthly losses, to be rebuked, or to be assailed is a trying experience, yet it need not, and should not, embitter us and make us testy, petulant and cynical. Better to turn the face towards the sunshine and let in the rays of hope, love, kindness, and charity. This will cause a sweetness of soul that makes itself felt in word, feeling, and act.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

CREAM TOAST WITH POACHED EGGS.—Prepare toast as usual. Lay each slice in a saucer before adding dressing, and then finish with a delicately poached egg. Eggs broken into separate sauce dishes or patty pans, and steamed until the whites are set, will present a more appetizing appearance than when dropped into water.

BRUSSELS SPROUTS.—Pick about two quarts of small, firm sprouts, wash well and boil in slightly salted water until tender, cool and drain. Melt four ounces of butter in a large pan, put in the sprouts, salt and pepper, set on a brisk fire and toss the pan about until the sprouts are heated through. Add chopped parsley and lemon-juice and serve.

BARLEY CREAM.—Wash a cup of barley, put it on the fire with water to cover it, boil gently until it is soft. While boiling, put in a stick of cinnamon or any other seasoning. When the barley is soft and thick take it off and strain it, then add a rich boiled custard, sweeten to taste. Add a glass of wine and serve frozen or not, as preferred.

FRUIT ROLLS.—To make fruit rolls, take bread dough ready for the oven, and roll it thin; spread over it a thin layer of butter and sprinkle with currants, seeded or halved raisins, and a little cinnamon. Cut into three inch wide strips, and roll up like jelly cake. Lay them flat in a baking tin or pan, cover and set in a warm place, and bake when light. They should be eaten within a short time—not later than three or four days.

A PUDDING FOR CHILDREN.—There are few puddings more suitable for children than a baked custard properly made, so that it is light and creamy. The secret of success lies in whisking the eggs, whites and yolks together, until they form a thick, creamy froth, and then pouring boiling milk, sweetened to taste, over them. When the custard is cool, it should be poured into a buttered pie dish, and baked in a moderately hot oven until a golden brown.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE largest tract of mineral land in the United States not yet prospected is in Arizona. The mountains are said to be full of gold, silver, copper, lead, and other valuable metals.

THE signet ring which the Pope wears is known as "the fisherman's ring." Its bezel bears an impression of St. Peter in his boat with fishing-nets.

THE first public library known to have existed was founded at Athens about 540 B.C. by Pisistratus. The Alexandria Library contained 400,000 valuable books, and was burned in 47 B.C.

MOST of the inhabitants of Haugesund, Norway, have never tasted intoxicants. It has a population of 6,300, and for twenty-nine years not a drop of spirituous liquor has been sold there.

IN Siam there is a species of small black ant officered by mounted "generals." Among the working troops monster ants—elephants as compared with the others—move at regular intervals, and on each of these ants sits or rides one of the small ants, evidently in command.

A COUPLE of live frogs have been found "imbedded in rock" during some excavations at Gateshead. Stories of frogs that have "lived" under such conditions for untold periods of time are common, but scientific investigation has demonstrated that the idea is a delusion.

IN countries where oranges grow in plenty country gentlemen use the cheapest kind for blacking their boots. The orange is cut in two, and the juice side of one half is rubbed on the sole of an iron pot, and then on the boot. Then the boot is rubbed with a soft brush, and a bright polish at once appears.

A SINGULAR Korean hat is a great round mat of straw worn by a mourner. The hat is bound down at the sides so as almost to conceal the head and face of the wearer. He carries in his hand a screen or fan, and when in the road, if any one approaches him, he holds the screen in front of him, so that it, together with the hat, completely conceals him.

A PORTABLE house of paper has recently been constructed in Hamburg. The walls consist of double layers of paper, of which the interior one is rendered proof against fire, and the exterior one against moisture. The room is fixed in frames, which can easily be attached to each other. The house is intended to serve as a restaurant, and contains a dining-room ninety feet long.

It is generally agreed among naturalists that the tortoise is the longest lived of all animals. There are many instances of them attaining the extraordinary age of 250 years, while one is actually mentioned as reaching the unparalleled age of 405 years. Notwithstanding these examples, which, of course, are exceptionally rare, the ordinary tortoise only lives, on an average, from 100 to 150 years.

THE Chinese are fond of eggs about 100 years old, and old eggs are worth about as much in China as old wine is in other countries. They have a way of burying the eggs, and it takes about thirty days to render a pickled egg fit to eat. Some of the old eggs have become as black as ink, and one of the favourite Chinese dishes for invalids is made up of eggs which are preserved in jars of red clay and salt-water.

THE great deposit safe of the new Nassau Bank, New York, is believed to be the finest of its kind yet constructed. A flight of marble and iron stairs leads down to it from the interior of the bank. It is built in the centre of the crypt, or basement, to which the steps descend, and is founded on concrete and granite. The floor is laid with marble and mosaics. There are two massive iron doors at each end of the vault, the outer ones being the largest single doors ever made for the purpose. Outside there are other electric burglar-alarm doors, which cannot be tampered with without sounding a loud alarm bell. The whole vault is illuminated day and night by electricity.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

IGNORANT.—Ecosse is French for Scotland.

CHAM.—There is no fixed price for old coins.

T. G.—Beets and turnips are excellent appetizers.

AMBITIOUS.—We are unable to trace the composer you mention.

IGNORANT.—Algeron is pronounced Al-jer-on, Alla, Lee-lah.

SEN ROMA.—You should marry in the name by which you are known.

QUARTERMASTER.—The officer on board who should be written to.

B. C.—Try long-continued friction with the hands, or rub with cold flannel.

D. R.—In arms and arm walking the lady should take the arm of the gentleman.

LOCILLA.—One of the most essential points in composition is correct punctuation.

LONGERANCE.—You and not your friend are right as to the revolution of the earth.

ALICE.—Fashion plates came in use during the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

A. R.—Good players of the harp are said to be the scariest of all musical performers.

ASPIRANT.—Favoursitism goes a great way in opening a path to renown for aspirants to dramatic honours.

BETTY.—We have not been able to obtain the information you ask for. If we do it shall be published in the usual way.

DISMISSAL.—Some people become bald at twenty, others retain their hair and its original colour until far advanced in life.

ONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO KNOW.—Certainly you are entitled to a share. Any respectable solicitor will put the matter right for you.

J. R.—All persons born in Her Majesty's dominions, whether of British or foreign parents, are by the British law deemed to be British subjects.

L. L.—When a doctor is called in to look at a case he naturally expects he is to attend as long as his services are necessary to the recovery of the patient.

WIDVOR.—Do not let your mind dwell upon the disastrous possibilities of war, as there is no reasonable prospect that there will be one to worry over.

EDWARD.—The quickest and surest way is to write to the people who advertise. They will no doubt respond at once and give you full and satisfactory information.

OLD READER.—We think you should not do more than wash with hot water, either containing a few drops of carbolic acid or use a strong tar or carbolic soap in washing.

QUARTERMASTER.—You cannot be married at any church of the established religion without the usual preliminaries having been gone through of banns published, or license obtained, &c.

R. M.—Words inserted in an indenture after it has been properly signed are of course not binding, unless the insertion has been made by mutual consent and in regular form.

PAVY.—Put into a saucepan six egg yolks, three ounces of sugar and half a pint of Madeira wine. Beat on the fire with an egg-beater until thick and frothy, and serve immediately.

COS.—No remarks are being taken in this country for the Cape Mounted Rifles, but write to the Agent-General for the Cape, Victoria-street, London, S.W., who will give fuller information.

B. R.—Russia leather is tanned with willow bark, which has but little tanning in it, and consequently tans it very slowly. Birch bark is also used, but the process is not generally known.

GLADYS.—Do not expose your hyacinths to full light and sunshine too quickly. If you have several pots of these bulbs keep some back. The flowers will be finer in the end. February is the hyacinth month.

WILLIAM.—The term baritone is properly applied to the male voice which is intermediate to the bass and tenor. It really describes a high bass voice, and cannot be correctly applied to the lowest voice in man.

LOVER OF DANCING.—The M.C. leads off the grand march at the opening of the ball, and then throughout the night moves about the hall arranging partnerships; sometimes calling the figures of the dance as it proceeds.

ADRIEN.—Belladonna has been found to render persons unsuspensible to scarlet fever in houses where it has prevailed. It is given in extract morning and night. Consult your physician in regard to the quantity to be taken.

BOB.—Copping-ink is prepared by adding a little sugar to ordinary black ink. Writing executed with this ink may be copied within the space of five or six hours by passing it through a press in contact with thin uncoated paper.

SIX YEARS' READER.—By dipping them in strong nitric acid and then at once in water; if extra dirty rub with mixture of equal weights of sulphuric acid and half quantity pure bicarbonate of potash, wash with water, dry and polish with whiting.

B. K.—We have no formula that would be of practical use to you, unless you have all the necessary appliances for the work you wish to undertake—the melting and running of rubber into moulds. Besides, the work requires practice and experience.

M. L.—Cookades or officers' servants' hats are usually confined to such as are in the employment of men in active service in the navy and regular army, not in the auxiliary forces; its assumption to the servant of a volunteer officer would excite adverse comment.

MILDRED.—Every fourth year is a leap year, with exception that only every fourth hundredth year is so distinguished; that is to say, 1900 will not be a leap year, but 2000 will, then 2100, 2200, and 2300 not so, but 2400 will, and so on every fourth hundred year after.

PHYLLIS.—Unless there is a well-established friendship it is just as well for a lady not to send any cards to gentlemen outside of her relations. If he is an old friend or a regular visitor in the household it might be admissible; but it is better not to do it.

B. V.—Dissolve one ounce bees wax in a pound of best boiled linseed oil over a gentle fire, or at side of one; give the cloth a good coat of the mixture, rubbing it into the texture with a piece of rag, and hang up in the breeze to dry; may take three or four days.

SALLIE.—The pent of the ribs called the nine holes is a good bit for pickling; take out the bones; boil the same pickle as for the tongue, and pour it boiling over the beef, and leave it for a week, even less; then wash it and roll it up; bind it with tape, and boil gently for two-and-a-half hours.

LOVER OF THE "LONDON READER."—It is of course not to be regarded as obligatory where dancing is only a part of the entertainment; and card-playing games, conversation, and other occupations make up the social duties of the evening, in which all can participate and make themselves agreeable.

SWEET EYES OF BLUE.

Sweet eyes of blue,
Shy eyes of blue,
Knowest all my love for you?
How I live for thy dear light
See thee in my dreams at night,
Sweet eyes of blue!

Sweet eyes of blue,
Pure eyes of blue,
See that I worship you?
You lift my soul beyond earth's heaven
Make of earth itself a heaven,
Sweet eyes of blue!

Sweet eyes of blue,
Tired eyes of blue,
Asleep 'neath rosemary and rue,
I'll forever hope for you.
And I know when life is through
You'll light my way to paradise,
Sweet eyes of blue!

A. M.

VERY WORRIED.—There are several sorts of diseases known under the general name of eczema. Some of them may be cured by the use of red precipitate ointment, which your druggist will prepare for you, with directions for use.

FISH OUT OF WATER.—A knowledge of the current topics of the day, the reading of newspapers, a glance over literary journals, and a careful attention to the discourse of others are indispensable for one who wishes to take part with ease in the conversation of the company amongst whom he may be thrown.

WORRIED.—We do not know how you can refuse to mediate in the case cited, especially as the parties have agreed to abide by your decision. Of course, this imposes upon you a great responsibility, but, at the same time, it is a compliment to your reputation for good judgment and clear sightedness.

M. H.—First soak it for twelve hours in dilute muriatic acid, then thoroughly wash it in water to get rid of the lime. Next immerse it in a solution of hypochlorite of soda, to which dilute muriatic acid has been added a moment before. When you find it has been bleached sufficiently take it out and again wash thoroughly in water and dry.

IMPATIENT.—What seems trifles to those uneducated in the manners of polite society becomes in the aggregate of importance to those who seek to appear well in company. Though it be true as first to comply with all the rules of formal etiquette you will soon fall in the way of observing them without being annoyed at their exactions.

BIDDY MALONE.—Try mounting the stained portion over a large tub and pouring warm water through it, then well dipping it up and down in the water for some time, then pour that water away and get fresh, and pursue the same course again and again. A little ammonia in the water each time might help. Use warm, not hot water.

IN DISTRESS.—It may be that wilfulness is, at present, her only sin, and that having had her own way for a time she will see the error of her conduct and reform. Our advice to you is to persevere in your efforts to persuade her to conform to the rules which govern every respectable household, and induce her to have her company at home instead of going in quest of it abroad.

PATTY BROWN.—To make orange marmalade cut and squeeze Seville oranges, according to the quantity to be made; then take out the pulp, leaving the rind very thin, which shred quite fine and boil till tender. Then boil the pulp quite soft and rub it through a hair sieve; mix the juice, pulp and rind together, and to every pound add one pint of clarified sugar. Boil the sugar till it snaps, then add the other ingredients. Let them boil ten minutes and then put into pots.

ONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO KNOW.—Milk Grotto is a cave or grotto, in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, in which, according to the legend, Mary and the Christ secreted themselves from the anger of Herod before they repaired to Egypt. It is the resort of pilgrims who believe that the stone of which the cave is composed has the power to increase the milk of mothers. Portions of this stone are broken off by the pilgrims, and sent to any country where faith exists in its efficacy.

COOK.—To cook veal with oysters take two fine outlets of about a pound each. Divide these into several pieces cut thin. Put them into a frying pan, with boiling lard, and let them fry awhile. When the veal is about half done add to it a quart of large oysters, then liquor thickened with a few grated bread crumbs, and seasoned with powdered mace and nutmeg. Continue the frying until the veal and oysters are thoroughly done. Send to the table in a covered dish.

LOYAL.—The British royal house is pure German descent. The Austrian Emperor is a German, and so are the Spanish princes. The King of Denmark is a German. The King of Sweden is of French ancestry (he is founder of the present line was Bernadotte), but his ancestors were Germans. In fact, the French royal line, the Portuguese, and the Italians are the only non-German among the royal houses of Europe. Even the kings and princes of the former Turkish provinces—Servia, Bulgaria, Greece and Roumania—are Germans.

MELINDA.—Half pound flour, quarter pound raisins or currants, two ounces of dripping or butter, two ounces of sugar, one egg, a little milk, two teaspoonfuls baking powder; rub the butter among the flour, then add the raisins and sugar and baking powder, beat up the eggs and add a little milk to it—just as little as moistens the whole, wet it to a dry paste with this; take two forks and put the mixture in small rough heaps on a baking sheet, sprinkle sugar over each, and put in a quick oven till ready.

MUCH TROUBLED.—No doubt if you were to put the clothing into a close box and light some sulphur beside the things, any vermin would be killed, but the seeds would retain their vitality; it is therefore necessary to boil all cotton clothing previous to washing, and to pour repeated pots of boiling water over woollen clothes, then to wash with carbolic soap, and when the clothing is dry go over with iron hot enough to burn if kept standing for an instant; do this up and down seams and round all gathers; this will effectually purify the clothing.

ANNA.—Pluck the feathers off when it is newly killed, if you can; then sludge it; open it at the back of the neck, take out the neck and leave four or five inches of the skin on; take out the stomach at the neck; open it above the tail and empty it; now wipe it out thoroughly, clean and dry it inside and out; make a stuffing: Quarter pound sausage meat (pork), quarter pound bread crumbs, a little parsley and herbs, pepper and salt, a pinch of nutmeg, one egg; mix all the things together; stuff the breast only, and truss it into shape; roast it for one and a half or one hour according to size.

MIMI.—Two pounds bitter oranges, one sweet orange, one lemon, six pounds of sugar. Pare the skins of the oranges and lemon very thinly, and cut them into very thin chips; then slice the whole of the orange across with a sharp knife into the thinnest possible slices, taking out all the pits. Put all this—that is, the sliced oranges and the skins, everything except the pits—into a basin, and cover with eight pints of cold water—that is about sixteen small breakfast cups; let this stand for about twenty-four hours, then put the whole in a preserving pan and boil till quite tender and transparent, which is for at least three hours. Pour it all out, and allow it to stand for twenty-four hours more, then put into the preserving pan with one and a quarter pound of sugar to each pint of juice, and let it boil for half an hour (after it begins) at least, or until it boils.

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